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The following tale possesses even more interest than usually attaches to a new story by Miss Mary E. Wilkins, for it is her first ghost-story. It has all of the extraordinary charm which belongs to her work, long or short, and yet with a fresh element added. It is written expressly for ROMANCE.

THE SCHOOL-TEACHER'S STORY.*

I HAVE taught school forty-four years. Now I have delivered the keys of my school-house to the committee, I have packed away on the top-shelf of my closet a row of primers and readers, geographies, spelling-books, and arithmetics, and I have stopped work for the rest of my life. Through all these forty-four years, I have squeezed resolutely all the sweets out of existence, and stored them up to make a kind of tasteless, but life-sustaining honey for old age. I have never spent one penny unless for the barest necessaries. I have added term by term to the sum on my bank-book, until I have been able to build this house, and have a sufficient sum at interest to live upon. I need little, very little, to eat, and I wear my clothes carefully and long.

I was never extravagant in clothes, but once. That was twenty-five years ago, when I was thirty-five, and expected to be married in the spring. I had a green silk dress then,—a bright green. But I had it dyed black, and, after all, got considerable wear out of it, although it was flimsy. Colored silk is apt to be. I had a blue woollen, too, a color I should never have bought, if I had not expected to be married, and that faded. I also had a black velvet cloak, something that was very costly, and I should not have bought it under any circumstances, but I was foolish. However, that has made my winter bonnets ever since; it was a good piece, and not cut up much.

Looking backward forty-four years, I cannot remember any other extravagance than this outlay in clothes when I expected to be married at thirty-five. I never

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have bought any candy except a few cough-drops when I had a cold. I have never bought a ribbon even, or a breast-pin. I have always worn my mother's old hair pin, although it was so old-fashioned, and the other girls had pretty gold and coral, or cameo ones.

My mother died when I was fourteen; my father, when I was sixteen; then I began to teach. My father left me nothing. Mother was sick all her life nearly, and he could not lay up a cent. However, there was enough to pay his funeral expenses, and I was thankful for that. I sometimes wonder what my father would say if he could see me now, and know how I am situated. I wonder if he would think I had done pretty well. I don't know how it can make any difference to him now; he is past all such earthly vanities, even if he knows about them, but I do sometimes feel glad I have done so well, on his account. Anybody has to have some account beside their own, even if it is somebody's that's dead.

I have built this house, with six rooms in it, and a woodshed. I have a little land, too. I keep hens, and I am going to have a vegetable-garden back of the house, and a flower-garden, front. I have good woollen carpets, all over the house except the kitchen. I have stuffed parlor furniture, and a marble-topped table, and a marble shelf with a worked plush scarf on it. I have a handsome dining-set, and two nice chamber-sets, and two beautiful silk quilts I pieced from bits my scholars gave me. I shouldn't be ashamed to have anybody go over my house. And I keep it nice, too; you could not find a speck of dust anywhere. Of course, I have nobody to put it out of order, and that makes a difference. It has always been my habit to look at all the advantage there is in life, and I have found there is an advantage-side to almost everything. I can keep my house a great deal nicer than I could if I were not all alone in the world. I sometimes wonder what I should do, if I had a man coming in with muddy boots, or children tracking in dirt, and stubbing out my carpets, or kicking the paint off my new doors.

To tell the truth, I have never cared much about chil-

dren, though I have been teaching them forty-four years. I never dared to say so before, but it is true. Once in a while I saw a child that I thought a good deal of, but taking them all together, I have often wondered how their own mothers could stand them. I would have worked my fingers to the bone for the few I did take a notion to. I fairly grudged them to their folks, but the others!—and I had to hide it, too; it wouldn't have done for the children to think I was partial. They had all the meanness of grown-up folks, without knowing enough to hide it. Grabbing each other's apple-cores, and teasing away each other's candy, and the big ones plaguing the little ones; throwing paper-balls, and marking up the walls, and everything else. I know, for one, that there's something in the doctrine of original sin. I guess most women that have taught a district school forty-four years do.

I have never been sure, either, that they learned anything so's to remember it, and have it do them any good. I have always been afraid that, no matter how hard I tried to do my duty by them, it was never quite done, and that I was teaching myself more than anybody else, just as I always seemed to hit my own hands harder than a scholar's when I had to ferule one.

I could travel all over the earth, on the map, and never once lose my way, but I wonder if my scholars could. I can spell through the spelling-book without missing a word, but I know that not one of my scholars can do it. I can do every sum in the arithmetic, measure the depths of all the wells, calculate the speed of all the dogs and foxes, and say the multiplication-tables by heart, but I am quite sure that no boy or girl ever left my school who could. It seems to me sometimes that I have gone to school to my scholars, instead of my scholars going to school to me, and that I have never been of any benefit to any one of them.

Still, I have sometimes thought that I was, once, and in a strange way, to the strangest scholar I ever had. Before thinking even of this scholar, and this story, I have to review my face, and my whole character, in my mental vision, as before a glass, to establish, as it were,

my own reliability to myself. Is it likely that anybody, who looks like that, should tell herself that she saw what she did not see, or heard what she did not hear? Is it likely that anybody, who *is* like that, should?

But, after all, I was never given to saying things that weren't plain common sense. Still, it has always kind of seemed to me, when I thought of that time in Marshbrook, that it didn't ring like any known metal. But there may be some metals that really are on earth, though they are not known, I suppose, and anybody might hear them ring, and be honest enough about it.

It was just twenty-five years ago to-day, that I went to Marshbrook to teach the Number One district-school. It was right in the middle of the spring-time. I had given up my old school, because I was expecting to be married that May. But when I found out he'd changed his mind toward me, I felt as if I had ought to go to work again. I'd laid out a good deal of money on my clothes, and I knew I'd have to make it up some way, as long as I was always going to have nobody but myself to depend on, the way I always had.

Maria Rogers had my old school. She had come from the east village to teach it, when I gave it up, and it wasn't more 'n three weeks before he began to go with her. She was good-looking, always smiling, though it always seemed to me it was a kind of silly smile. I was always sober and set-looking, and I couldn't smile easy even if I felt like it. Her hair curled, too. I tried to curl mine, but it wouldn't look like hers. I wouldn't believe it at first when folks came and told me he was going with her, and they thought I ought to know; but after a while I saw enough to satisfy me, myself. I wrote him a letter, and told him, I'd found out he had changed his mind, and he had my best wishes for his welfare and prosperity, and then I began to look out for another school. He didn't marry Maria Rogers till the spring term was through. She wanted the money for her wedding-clothes. She was a poor girl, or I could have had my old school. As it was, she had him, and my school, too.

I don't know as I should have got any till fall, if the

teacher at the Number One district in Marshbrook hadn't left sudden. One of the committee came for me the next day, and said I'd got to go there, whether or no. I asked why the other teacher had left, and he said she wasn't very well,—"kind of hysteriky," he called it. He was an old man, and a doctor. I looked him straight in the face when he spoke, and I knew there was something behind what he said, and he knew I did.

"I'll give you fifty cents a week more, seeing as you come to oblige," says he.

"Very well," says I. I knew what it all meant. I had heard about district Number One in Marshbrook, ever since I could remember. They never could keep a teacher there through the spring term. There wasn't any trouble fall, and winter, but the teacher would leave in the spring term. They always tried to hush it up, and nobody ever knew exactly what they left for. I rather guess they bound the teachers over not to tell, —maybe paid them a little extra. Anyway, nobody ever knew exactly what it was, but it got whispered round there was something wrong about the Number One school-house.

Nobody but a stranger or somebody that was along in years and pretty courageous could be hired to go there and teach the spring term. The chances were that old Doctor Emmons couldn't get another soul besides me for love or money, and if I wouldn't go, the school would have to be shut up till fall. But I didn't care anything about the stories. I never was one of the kind that listen, and hark, and screech, and I had had enough real things to think and worry about. Then I had a kind of feeling then,—I suppose it was wicked, —that it didn't matter much what happened anyway, after what *had* happened.

So I just packed up my trunk, while Doctor Emmons waited, and then he put it in behind in his wagon, and carried me over to Marshbrook. It was about six miles away.

Marshbrook was named after the brook there, that runs through marshy land, and gets soaked up in it some

seasons of the year. That spring it was quite high, and the land all around it was yellow as gold with cowslips. We rode beside it quite a ways, and the Doctor said his wife had boiled cowslip greens twice. He talked considerable about such things being better for folks to eat than meat, too. He didn't say a word about the school, till he set me down at the house where I was going to board. Then he said I looked as if I wasn't fidgety, and he hadn't any notion but what I should get along well, and like the school. Then he said, kind of as if he hated to, but thought he'd better, that he guessed I might just as well make up my mind not to stay after school at night much, and not to keep the scholars. The school-house was in rather a lonesome place, and some stragglers might come along; then, too, it was rather damp there, being near the brook, after the dew fell, and he didn't think it was very healthy. I said, "Very well." Then Mr. Orrin Simonds, the man where I was going to board, came out, and they carried my trunk betwixt them into the house.

I began school the next morning, and got along well enough. The school was quite a large one, about forty in it, and none of them very old. They behaved well as usual, and I taught them the best I knew how. I ought to have done better by them than I had ever done for other scholars, for I hadn't any lookout for myself to take my mind off. I suppose I always had had a little, though I had hardly known it myself, and I ought to have been ashamed of it.

I did not stay after school for some two weeks, not because I was afraid of anything, for I wasn't, but I hadn't any call to. I didn't mind what Doctor Emmons had said at all, as far as I was concerned, but I thought I wouldn't keep the scholars anyway, so if anything did come up, I wouldn't be blamed on their accounts. There wasn't anybody to blame me on mine, if I didn't give up the school,—and I wasn't going to do that, anyway.

I went to meeting the Sunday after I went to Marshbrook. I suppose some folks thought I would get somebody to carry me home to meeting, seeing as it was only

six miles, and I belonged to the church there, but I felt as if I had just as soon see some new faces.

Maria Rogers used to sit right in front of me at home.

I noticed that folks in the meeting-house at Marshbrook eyed me some. I don't know whether it was because I had come to teach the Number One school, or because I wore my green silk. I suppose it did look 'most too fine, but I had it, and it was a pleasant Sunday, and I thought I might just as well wear it, though somehow, every time I looked down at my lap as I sat in meeting, there was something about the color seemed to strike over me, and make me sick. I never liked green very well, but he did, and that was why I got it. I liked it better after it was colored, though it seemed a shame to have all the stiffening taken out of it. It was a beautiful piece.

I had a good boarding-place, just Mr. Simonds and his wife, and she was as neat as wax and a good cook. She was kind of woodeny, and didn't talk much, but I didn't feel much like talking, and I liked it full as well. She used to have supper early, about as soon as I got home from school, and then I used to go up-stairs to my chamber, and sit by myself. Mrs. Simonds didn't neighbor much, she said, but I guess after I came folks run in more. I'd hear them talking down-stairs. I guess they wanted to find out how I was getting along at the Number One school.

Once Mrs. Simonds said, if she was in my place, she'd make her plans not to stay after school. She didn't seem any more fidgety herself than a wooden post, but I guess she'd heard so much from the neighbors, she thought she ought to say something.

I said I hadn't had any occasion to stay after school, and I hadn't. I didn't really have any occasion the night I did stay, but I felt kind of down at the heel, and I didn't want any supper, and I just sat there on the platform behind my desk, after the scholars marched out of the room.

I don't know how long I sat there,—quite a while, I suppose, for it began to grow dusky. The frogs peeped as if they were in the room, and there was a damp wind

blew in the window, and I could smell wintergreen, and swamp-pinks. It was all I could do to keep the children from chewing wintergreen-leaves in school-time. They were real thick all around the school-house.

All of a sudden, as I sat there, I had a queer feeling as if there was somebody in the room, and I looked up. I saw, down in the middle of the room, a little white arm raised in the dusk. It was the way the children did, when they wanted to ask something, and I thought for a second that one had stayed or come back, unbeknown to me, and was raising an arm. Of course, that was queer, but it was the only reason I could think of, and it flashed through my head.

"What is it?" says I, and then I heard a little girl's voice pipe up, "Please, teacher, find my doll for me, and hear my next lesson in the primer."

"What?" says I, for it didn't seem to me I could have heard right. And then the voice said it over again, and that little white arm crooked out of the gloom.

I got up, and went down the aisle between the desks, and when I came close enough, I saw a little girl, in a queer, straight white dress, almost like a night-gown, sitting there. Her little face was so white in the gloom, it made me creep, and her features looked set; even her mouth didn't move when she spoke. It was open a little, and the words just seemed to flow out between her lips.

"Please, teacher, find my doll for me, and hear my next lesson in the primer," says she over again, dreadful pitiful.

I put my hand on her shoulder, and then I jumped and took it away, for I never felt anything so cold as her little shoulder was. It seemed as if the cold struck to my heart from it, and I had to catch my breath.

"What is your name?" says I, as soon as I could.

"Mary Williams, aged six years, three months, and five days," says she.

Then my blood ran cold, but I tried to reason it out to myself again, that she was some child I hadn't seen, that had run in there, and maybe she wasn't quite right in her mind.

"Well," says I, "you had better run home now. If you want to come to school, you can come at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, if your mother is willing. Then I will hear your lesson, and maybe you will find your doll, but you mustn't bring it to school. I can't have any dolls brought to school."

With that she rose up, and dropped a queer little curtsey that made a puff of icy cold wind in my face, and was out of the room, very fast, as if she slid or floated, without taking any steps at all.

I put on my bonnet, and locked up the school-house, and went home then. Looking back, I can't say as I felt scared or nervous at all. I know I didn't walk a mite faster when I went past the old graveyard. There was an old graveyard near the school-house, and the children used to play there at recess.

When I got home, Mrs. Simonds asked why I hadn't been home, and if I didn't want any supper, but she didn't act surprised nor curious. She never seemed surprised or curious at anything.

I went up-stairs to my chamber, and sat down and thought it over. It seemed to me there must be some above-board reason for it. As I thought it over, I remembered that there had been a strange, faint, choking smell about the child, and then I put my own dress-skirt up to my face, and I smelled it then. I hung my dress out of the window to air, when I took it off.

The next morning, when the scholars filed in to school, I tried to think that strange little girl might be among them, but she wasn't, and she didn't come in the afternoon.

That night I stayed after school again. I had made up my mind I would. I waited, and after a while that little white arm showed out of the dusk, but I had not seen the child come into the room.

I asked her again what she wanted, and she piped up, just as she did before, "Please, teacher, find my doll for me, and hear me say the next lesson in the primer."

I got up, and went to her just as I had before, and there she was just the same, and the faint smell came in my face.

"When did you lose your doll?" says I.

But she wouldn't say.

"Please, teacher, find my doll for me, and hear me say my lesson in the primer," says she, with a kind of a wail. I never heard anything so pitiful as it was. It seemed to me, somehow, as if all the wants I had ever had myself, sounded in that child's voice, and as if she was begging for something I had lost myself.

But I spoke decided. It was always my way with children. I found it worked better. "Now you run right home," says I, "and you come to-morrow, and I'll give you your doll, and hear your lesson in the primer."

And then she rose up and curtsied, just as she had before, and was gone.

I did not try to follow her.

That evening, I went around to old Doctor Emmons', and asked Mrs. Emmons if I could see the doctor a few minutes.

I guess she suspected what had happened, for she looked at me real sharp, and said she hoped I wasn't getting nervous, and overwrought with school-teaching. I said I wasn't. I just wanted to see the doctor about a new scholar; and she left me in the sitting-room, and called him in.

I asked him, point-blank, if anything had ever happened there in Marshbrook, and he wouldn't tell me at first.

"I suppose you want to give the school up. I thought you were old enough to behave yourself," says he. He was pretty short sometimes, but he meant well.

"I've done the best I could by the school," says I.

"Why couldn't you come home when school was done, as you was told to, instead of staying there in that lonesome place, and getting hystericky?" says he. "I don't know as I can get another teacher this term. The school-house will have to be shut up. It's a pity all the female school-teachers in creation couldn't be ducked a few times, and get the fidgets out of them. I'll get a man for the place next time. I've had enough of women."

"I don't want to give up the school," says I.

"What are you talking about then?" says he.

"I want to know if anything has ever happened here in Marshbrook," says I. "I don't want to give up the school if anything *has* happened."

He finally told me how a little girl had been murdered, some fifty or sixty years ago, on her way to school, on the brook-road. They found her laying dead beside a clump of swamp-pinks, with a great bruise on the back of her neck, as if she'd been hit by a stone, and her doll and her primer were laying in the road, where she'd dropped them when she run from whoever killed her. They never found him.

"Was her name Mary Williams?" says I.

"How did you know it?" says the doctor.

"She told me," says I.

The old doctor turned as white as a sheet.

"You ain't hystericky," says he.

When he found out I wasn't scared, and didn't want to give up the school, he wanted to know what I'd seen, and asked a good many questions. I told him as short as I could, and then I went home.

The next morning before school, I got some linen rags from Mrs. Simonds, and a piece of bright blue thibet, and I made a real pretty little rag-baby. I'd never made one before, but I couldn't see why I didn't make it as well as anybody. I ravelled out a little of an old black stocking I had for its hair, and I colored its cheeks and mouth with cranberry juice, and made its eyes with blue ink. I found, too, an old primer, that Mrs. Simonds said her mother had studied, for I thought that might have been like the one the child was carrying to school, when she was killed.

That night I stayed after school again, and waited until I saw the little white arm raised out of the dusk. She did not wait for me to speak that time. She piped up quick, "Please, teacher, find my doll for me, and hear me say my lesson in the primer."

"Put your arm down, and be quiet," says I, "and I will hear your lesson." I put the rag-doll in my pocket, and took the old primer I had found, and went to her.

"Find the place, and go on with your lesson," says I,

and I gave her the book. She turned over the leaves, as if she were quite accustomed to it, and I saw at once that I had the right book. It was a queer little primer, that had been written by an old minister in Marshbrook, and used in the schools there for some time. She found the place soon, and began to read, piping up quite loud. You could have heard her out-of-doors; the windows were open. The piece was called, "The Character of a Good Child." She read it very well. I only had her spell out a few of the words.

"You have got your lesson very well," says I. Then I took the doll out of my pocket, and gave it to her. She fairly snatched for it with her little, white, gleaming hands and they touched mine, and I felt the cold strike to my heart again.

She hugged the doll tight, and kissed it with her stiff, parted lips. Then she held it off, and looked at it.

"Please, teacher, find my doll for me," says she with a great wail, and I saw she knew it wasn't her own old doll.

"Hush," says I, "I can't find a doll that's been lost fifty years. This doll is just exactly as good. Now, you'd better take it, and run home."

But she just gave that pitiful cry again,—"Please, teacher, find my doll for me."

"You are not behaving pretty at all," says I. "That doll is just as good." Then, I don't know what possessed me to say it, but I says, "She hasn't got any mother, either."

She just hugged the doll tight, and kissed it again then, and didn't say another word against it.

"Now, you'd better run home," says I.

She rose up, and curtsied, and I was all ready to spring. I followed her. I didn't know as I could keep her in sight, but I did, and she went into the old graveyard. I saw a gleam of white in there a minute; then it was gone.

That evening, I went to Doctor Emmons, and told him what had happened. "Now," says I, "I want to know where that child was buried."

"She was buried in the old Williams tomb," says he.

Then I asked him to take a lantern, and go to the graveyard with me, and look in that tomb. I didn't know as I could make him for quite a while. He said the Williams family had all died out, and gone away. There wasn't one of them left in town. He didn't exactly know who had the key of the tomb, and he kept looking at me real sharp. I suppose he was afraid I was getting hystericky. I guess he got pretty sure at last that I wasn't, for I taught that Marshbrook Number One school seven years after that, though any young thing could have done it, and stayed after school every night in the spring-terms, for that little girl never came to scare anybody again. He kept looking at me that night, and then he felt my pulse and counted it by his watch.

"You don't want to give the school up," says he.

"No, I don't," says I.

He went out after a while, and presently he came back with a lighted lantern and a key. I don't know where he got it. Then we went down the road to the graveyard. It was a dark night, and it was misting a little. He went along in front with the lantern, and I followed on behind. He didn't speak a word the whole way. I guess he felt kind of grouty at having to come out. I didn't care if he was. I was bound to find out.

When we came to the old graveyard, he opened the gate, and we went in. His lantern lit up all the old headstones, and trees, and scraggy bushes, as we went across to the Williams tomb. It wasn't very far from the gate. A lot of little bushes were growing out of the humped-up roof, and I read *Williams* in the stonework over the iron door. The doctor fitted the key in the lock, while I held the lantern. I felt the way I used to when I was a child, when I waked up in the dark, in the night, but I held the lantern as steady as if my hand had been an iron hook.

It was hard to turn the key in the rusty padlock, and the doctor worked quite a long time, but finally it snapped back, and he pulled off the padlock, and slipped the hasp. But even then he could not open the door until he had cleared away some stones and pulled up

some little plants that had grown over the threshold by the roots.

After he had done that, he opened the door, and a puff of that same strange odor which I had noticed about the child, came in my face. He took the lantern and stepped down and into the tomb, and I after him. All of a sudden, he stopped short, and caught hold of my arm. There, on the floor of the tomb, in the lantern-light, right before us, lay the doll, and the primer.

This affecting story of two brave and noble beings is told with all of that singular power which belonged to the rich genius of its lamented author, Guy de Maupassant. It has been made into English for ROMANCE by R. B. Wyllyss.

DEVOTION.

I.

BEYOND Cannes the diligence was full and the passengers were chatting together. As they passed Tarascon some one said, "This is the place where there have been so many murders," and then the talk turned upon the mysterious person who had frequently assassinated travellers during the past two years. The men conjectured and gave advice, while the women shudderingly peered through the windows into the dark night, fearing that the face of the murderer would suddenly appear at the coach-door. And then everybody began to tell terrifying stories of perilous encounters, of being shut in with maniacs, of spending hours alone with suspected criminals.

Each man knew a tale redounding to his own credit. Each one had intimidated some malefactor, thrown him down and made him prisoner under most unfavorable circumstances, with great presence of mind and admirable bravery. A physician who spent his winters in the South took his turn at telling a story.

"For my part," said he, "I have never had a chance to test my courage in affairs of this sort, but I knew a woman, one of my patients, now dead, who had a most singular and at the same time mysterious and touching experience.

"She was a Russian, the Countess Marie Baranow, a woman of high rank and exquisite beauty. You all know how lovely those Russians are; at least, they seem so to us, with their straight noses, delicate mouths, enticing, blue-gray eyes, and cold, almost haughty, grace. They are at once mischievous and alluring, proud and

gentle, cold and tender, to a Frenchman completely charming. And yet it may be only the difference in race and type which so attracts me.

"The Countess Marie's physician had known for several years that her lungs were diseased and had urged her to go to the south of France, but she steadfastly refused to leave St. Petersburg. Finally, last autumn, the doctor, having given up all hope, warned her husband, who immediately commanded her to go to Mentone.

"On the train she was alone, her servants being in another compartment. Sadly she sat by the window and looked out at the fields and villages, feeling lonely and deserted, without children, almost without relatives, with a husband whose love was so dead that he could thus send her alone to the end of the earth, just as he would send a sick valet to the hospital.

"At each station her old servant Ivan came to inquire if she needed anything. He was blindly devoted to his mistress and ready to obey her implicitly.

"Night fell and the train rolled swiftly onward. The countess, though utterly worn out, could not sleep. Suddenly she thought of counting the French money which her husband had given her at the last moment, and opening her small bag, she emptied the pieces of shining metal upon her lap.

"A sudden breath of cold air struck her face; she raised her head in surprise, and discovered that the door was being opened. Astonished, she quickly threw a shawl over the money spread out upon her knees, and waited; some seconds passed, and then a man in evening dress appeared. He was bareheaded and panting, with a wound in one of his hands. He closed the door, sat down and, after looking at his neighbor with flashing eyes, wrapped a handkerchief around his bleeding wrist.

"The young woman was weak with fright. This man had, of course, seen her counting her gold and had come to rob and kill her. He was gazing at her fixedly with heaving chest and distorted face, ready, doubtless, to spring upon her.

"'Madame,' he said abruptly, 'do not be afraid!' She

made no reply; incapable of opening her lips, she heard her heart beat and her ears hum. 'I am not a criminal, madame,' he added.

"Again she did not speak, but in a quick movement which she made her knees separated, letting her money roll to the floor like water from a rainspout.

"The man looked at the stream of gold-pieces with surprise, and immediately stooped to pick them up. Terrified, the countess jumped to her feet, dropping all of her money, and rushed to the door to throw herself from the train. But her companion, guessing her purpose, sprang forward, seized her in his arms and forced her into a seat.

"Holding her wrists he exclaimed: 'Listen to me, madame. I am no robber; to prove it I will pick up your money and return it to you. But I am a lost, a dead man, if you do not aid me to pass the frontier—I cannot tell you more. In one hour we shall be at the last Russian station. In twenty minutes more we shall reach the limits of the Empire. If you do not help me, I am lost. Madame, I swear to you I have neither killed nor robbed nor done anything dishonorable. More I cannot tell.'

"Dropping upon his knees, he picked up the money under the seats, even searching for the pieces that had rolled away. Then when the leather bag was again filled, he handed it to his neighbor without a word, and took a seat in another corner of the compartment.

"Neither of them stirred. She was motionless and mute, still faint with fright, though gradually gaining courage. As for him, not a gesture, not a movement did he make; he sat erect, with staring eyes, and face pale as death. From time to time she gave him a hasty glance, then quickly looked away. He was about thirty years old, very handsome, and had every appearance of being a gentleman.

"The train rushed on through the darkness, sending its shrill whistle out into the night, going slower at times and then resuming its former swiftness. But suddenly the engine lessened its speed, whistled several times and finally stopped.

"Ivan appeared at the door for orders. The countess glanced at her strange companion once more, and then said to her servant in a trembling voice: 'Ivan, you are to return to the count. I have no further need for you.'

"The astounded fellow opened wide his big eyes and stammered: 'But—my lady——'

"'No, you are not to come,' she said. 'I have changed my mind, and wish you to remain in Russia. Wait, here is the money for your journey. Give me your hat and coat.'

"The old valet, accustomed to the sudden whims and imperious caprices of masters, though bewildered, obeyed without a word; then he withdrew, his eyes filled with tears.

"The train started, hurrying on to the frontier. The Countess Marie at last spoke to her neighbor: 'These things are for you, monsieur; you are my servant, Ivan. I make but one condition regarding what I am about to do. It is that you will not speak to me, that you will not say one word, either to thank me or for any other cause.'

"The stranger bowed without replying. Soon there was another stop and uniformed officials visited the train. The countess handed them her papers and, pointing to the man seated in the shadow of her compartment, said: 'My servant, Ivan; here is his passport.'

"The train moved on.

"During the entire night these two were alone, both of them silent. When morning came and they stopped at a German station, the stranger got out and, standing at the door, said: 'Pardon me, madame, for breaking my promise; but I have deprived you of your servant, and it is only right that I should take his place. Are you in need of anything?'

"She replied, coldly: 'Go find my maid.'

"He did so and then disappeared.

"When the countess alighted at a refreshment station, she saw him at a distance, watching her. They arrived at Mentone."

II.

The doctor paused a moment, and then continued:

"One day when I was receiving my patients in my office, a tall man entered and said to me: 'Doctor, I have come to inquire about the Countess Marie Baranow. Though she does not know me, I am one of her husband's friends.' I answered: 'Her case is hopeless. She will never return to Russia.'

"The man abruptly began to sob, then he rose and left the room, staggering like a drunkard.

"That evening, when I told the countess that a stranger had called to ask me about her health, she seemed touched and told me the story that I have given you.

"'And this man,' she added, 'whom I do not know, follows me now like my shadow. I meet him every time I go out. He looks at me in a peculiar way, but he has never spoken to me.' She thought an instant, and then added: 'Wait, he is doubtless at this moment under my window.'

"She quitted her reclining-chair, drew aside the curtain, and actually showed me the man who had come to me, seated on a bench in the square, watching the hotel. He perceived us and, rising, walked away without once turning his head.

"After that I assisted in this curious and sad affair, in this silent attachment of two beings who were unknown to each other.

"He loved with the ardor of a rescued animal, full of gratitude and undying devotion. He came to me every day to ask: 'How is she?' realizing that I understood, and he wept passionately when he saw her pass, growing steadily paler and more feeble.

"She told me: 'I have never spoken to this strange man but once, and yet it seems as if I had known him for twenty years.'

"Whenever they met, she returned his salutation with a grave but charming smile. I felt that she who was so forsaken, and so fully aware of her hopeless condition,

was happy in being loved with such homage and constancy, with such poetic fervor and ever-ready devotion —and yet, faithful to her inflexible exaltation, she steadfastly refused to receive him, to know his name, or to speak to him. 'No, no,' she said; 'that would ruin our unique friendship. We must remain strangers.'

"As for him, he was indeed equally Quixotic, for he made no attempt to approach her. He wished to keep to the end the absurd promise never to speak to her, which he had made on the train.

"Often during the long hours of her illness she would rise from her couch and go part her curtains to see if he was there, under her window. And when she had seen him, always sitting motionless upon his bench, she would lie down again with a smile upon her lips.

"She died one morning about ten o'clock. As I left the hotel, he came to meet me, his face contorted with suffering. He already knew.

"'I would like to see her in your presence for one moment,' he said.

"I took his arm and re-entered the house. When he reached her bedside, he seized her hand and pressed upon it one long kiss; then he rushed out like a madman."

The doctor paused once more, and then continued: "That is certainly the most singular railway episode that I know of. It must be admitted that some people are very queer."

A woman murmured in a low voice, "Those two were not so senseless as you might think. They were—they were——"

But she could not speak on account of her tears. Somebody changed the conversation to calm her, so they never knew what she wished to say.

In accordance with the announcement in the prospectus of ROMANCE for 1894, a group of three charming Society Tales is presented in this and the two following stories. "A Foolish Girl," though "only a governess," comes of a good family and is treated like the older sister of her young charges. Her interesting love-affair is described by Nora Perry.

A FOOLISH GIRL.

"DON'T stare so, Annie; it's very rude of you."

"But she doesn't take the least notice of me."

"Well, it's rude to stare at any one so, all the same. Do come on faster, Annie. I'm ashamed of you."

"Oh, but she interests me so much, Alice. While everybody is out of doors walking and talking, and listening to the band, she sits there alone, and neither seems to listen nor to look at anything. Alice," in a softer voice, "do you know I think it is one of those French girls who has got bad news of her—her lover perhaps, in the last mail. There are ever so many French families here from Paris."

Alice laughs; for Alice is matter-of-fact and unimaginative, and consequently does not invest every pretty, melancholy-looking face with a tragedy because there is a war going on at this time. Alice laughs.

"Of course you'd get up a romance, Annie. I dare say it's only somebody who has a fit of indigestion. There, Uncle John is beckoning to us; we must go on now. Come!"

A young man sauntering up the street, just arrived at this little Breton watering place, which at this season is so full and so fashionable, overhears the conversation, and turns involuntarily to see the cause of it. If the fanciful little English girl could have seen his start of surprised recognition as his eyes rested upon the heroine of her romance, her "French girl" in the hotel balcony, she would at once have added another chapter to her romance. But if the girl, pale and dark-eyed, who sits there wrapped in a gray shawl, looks like a

Frenchwoman, the young man who is now rapidly approaching her certainly does not look like a Frenchman, with his square shoulders, his stoutish build, his close-cut, reddish hair, and tawny beard. The prosaic Alice would no doubt have relished the utter demolition of her sister's romantic fancies if she had heard the unmistakable plain English of the hearty "How do you do, Miss Ada?" a moment later, and the response in the same accents from the "French girl." And when, in another moment, the gentleman repeats the bit of conversation he has just overheard, the laugh that falls readily from the young lady's lips dissipates entirely the supposition of a tragical love story in her case.

"The idea of my looking so sentimental as all that comes to, George!" she says after her laugh.

"But you did look what our French friends would call uncommonly *triste*, when I first caught sight of you, Miss Ada."

"Did I? How interesting. If *triste* meant ill-tempered, it would suit the case very well. But come, tell me about yourself, George. You're the last person I expected to see here. When I left New York, you were in China, or some other outlandish place."

"And I haven't been home since. I sailed from there to England, and as I was a little worn out, I was ordered here."

Miss Payne regarded her companion for a moment with a little more attention than she had yet bestowed upon him. "You've been ill?" she asked.

"Not exactly, but not quite well. I had too much care in Hong Kong. The bookkeeper died there, and couldn't be replaced for some months."

"Business, always business with us Americans. It kills us." Then, with a small, unmirthful laugh, "It has nearly killed me already."

"You? what do you know of it, Miss Ada?"

"I? Oh, I've been at the hardest kind of business, George. Your tea business in China is nothing to governessing."

"What sent you into that?" asks Mr. King in a surprised tone.

"What sends most people to work—lack of money, Master George."

"But you came—I thought"—George flounders in confusion. He has not that ready wit which enables him to steer clear of dangerous facts.

"Yes, I came abroad with the Carneys by their invitation, but I came as the children's governess. I dare say any other girl under the sun would find nothing but enjoyment in these circumstances, but I am not any other girl; I'm Adelaide Payne, with the quickest temper and the meanest pride and the most cantankerous spirit that you'll find anywhere."

George King laughed. All this to him was only Miss Ada's exaggerated nonsense. With him her "quick temper" was proper spirit, the "meanest pride" was independence, and the "cantankerous spirit" sore sensitiveness. But then you must take into consideration that George was in love with this young woman; in love with her, though she had rejected him nearly two years ago. He had now apparently resigned himself to the post of friendship. This wasn't so difficult a thing to do with Adelaide Payne as it might have been with another woman, for she was curiously free from that kind of vanity or sentimentalism which makes some women, most women, selfish egotists in such matters. Six weeks after George had received his *congé* from her, she met him accidentally, and, greeting him without a shade of embarrassment, began talking to him about some of her plans; for Adelaide had always some new plan on foot. Ever since then, whenever they had chanced to be together, Adelaide always treated him in the same easy way of intimate friendship; and George liked it. But sitting there with him upon the balcony of the Breton hotel, after a year's absence, she doesn't talk to him any more of her plans, and George wonders why not, and something flashes into his mind to account for this silence, which turns him giddy. What if—King is the most delicate fellow in the world with his friends; he never asks them questions; but now, for the first time in his life, he begins to pump.

"And if you hate governessing, Miss Ada, and are

not happy here with the Carneys, haven't you some new plan?"

"Some new plan!" And Adelaide Payne laughs a little bitterly. "I don't wonder you talk of some new plan; for I've done little else in my life but make plans. What absurd things haven't I undertaken? As quick as I was out of school, and that was altogether too quick, I can tell you, I began to have these plans to get a little more money to buy the endless gloves and gowns and the rest of the gimcracks that women need. My goodness, George! why don't gowns and gloves and the rest of the things grow ready for our picking? Fancy, though, how we lovely creatures would scratch each other's eyes out, getting the best of each other!" George laughs, and Ada goes on. "I used to make yards and yards of tatting, and sell it to my mother's acquaintances, in those early school days. I think they knew how hard up we were, and started me somehow on that little commercial track purposely. After that I tried my various small accomplishments in numerous ways, winding up with that inevitable conclusion for all single women of small means, or of no means at all —teaching. And now—I dare say, I'm ungrateful and undeserving—I don't defend myself—but now I'm quarrelling with that. George, you may laugh, but, seriously and honestly, I am disgusted with myself. Any other girl would have settled into a respectable worker by this time, but I seem to fly out at everything; and it is because I am cantankerous, I suppose. If I go on like this—and I'm likely to for aught I see—I shall bring up in the poorhouse."

At this concluding sentence George's heart goes up like a feather, and he draws a long breath.

"What's the matter, George? are your lungs affected?" asks Miss Payne.

"No, it's my heart," answers George quite seriously.

"You don't say so! The result of that overwork. Just as I said. Americans are always killing themselves with work. I'm on the same road to destruction, only mine is fretting over the work; but it's all the same, it's the necessity."

"Miss Ada, I don't see why you don't get somebody to do your work for you. I—I——" and George looks like a fool and fidgets with his great crop of red beard —"I know one fellow who would be very glad to do it."

"George!"

King nearly jumped from his chair.

"I don't blame you for taking me up in that way. I suppose any man might be expected to think a woman was flinging herself at his head, who had been going on as I have. But I did think you knew me better."

"Miss Ada, Miss Ada, I hadn't such an idea. I hadn't, on my honor. I knew you never thought of me but as your friend. You were speaking to me as a man might speak to another."

"I wasn't!" retorted Miss Ada. "I was speaking to you like the most foolish of women—fretting, complaining, when there was no earthly use in it."

"The reason I spoke as I did," poor George went on explaining, "was because I couldn't help wishing that I might serve you in the only way I could; for I've never forgotten what I said two years ago, Miss Ada."

A moment's silence, in which Miss Payne regards the downcast face of her companion with curious scrutiny. Then quite in another key she breaks out:

"George, you may thank your stars you are not rich."

The young man looks up in amazement. "What do you mean?" he asks.

"I mean that if you were rich, I should be base enough to marry you."

"Ada!" The light that was never on sea or land flashes over George King's face. Miss Payne looks a little frightened at the effect of her words.

"Don't mistake me, George," she hurried on. "I do not mean—George, if I loved you, I would marry you to-morrow as you are."

King's face flushed and paled; but all the light went out of it.

"I've said a horrid thing, I know—a selfish thing; but I'm not so bad as I might be, for, George, if you were made of gold, I couldn't marry you if I didn't *like* you."

George lifted up his head again with a quick motion. "Thank you for saying that, Miss Adelaide," he responded.

"I don't deserve any thanks; I owe so much to you, George."

"You don't owe me anything, Miss Ada," answers George in his kindest tone. There is a pause; presently:

"Miss Ada, if you feel that way about—about money, you know, I don't see why you haven't found some one who—who——"

"Who was a gentleman as well as a rich man—is that what you mean?" asks Miss Payne, extricating George from his sentence with that straightforward celerity of hers.

"Yes, that's what I mean exactly," assents George.

A little ejaculation of impatience from Miss Payne, and then:

"George, it is only in novels that the rich man appears in the nick of time—the rich man who is a decent sort of person, in the same class or rank with the young woman who wishes to dispose of herself. Miss Braddon manufactures that desirable *parti* with the greatest ease. Her heroines get into difficulties, that is, they find themselves poorer than church mice, with not an idea where their next pair of gloves is coming from, when up pops the inevitable rich man, who is just as inevitably a gentleman with whom almost any girl in her senses would be in love anyway. I don't know such rich men; I know instead a little wizen-faced horror—a widower of sixty, who is *not* a gentleman. He sits in front of us at St. Michael's, and stares at me, the wretch! every Sunday. They say he's rolling in wealth; and he got it at some dirty business to which no gentleman would stoop. And I know another rich man, an old bachelor who eats his dinner in his shirt-sleeves summer and winter, and who sits on his front doorstep, which is opposite Aunt Ann's, in the same beastly fashion of demi-toilet. I believe both these specimens are millionaires, and I'd rather risk the poorhouse—good gracious! I'd rather kill myself outright than marry either of them!"

"I should think so!" ejaculated George King with emphasis. For a few moments there is silence between them. George breaks it by saying:

"You put a morbid value upon money, I think, Miss Ada?"

"George, you don't know what you're talking about," begins Adelaide vehemently. "If you had all your life felt the want of money as I have—if you had seen those you loved pinched and straitened day after day, with always a dread before you of perhaps greater pinching and straits, which you were powerless to alleviate—I wonder if you or any other man wouldn't put what you call a morbid value on money."

"Yes, I dare say I should," King answers with a sympathetic tone in his voice.

And here, the young Carney girls coming in, the talk ends. They all know George King, and all like him, and, standing about him, ask a whirlwind of questions. A little Carney suddenly says:

"Oh, why didn't you come before, Mr. King, so as to go back with us next week to America?"

"Next week?" asks George.

"Yes, next week, in the *Calabria*, papa said to-day when we were out driving."

And next week when the *Calabria* sails, George King is one of the passengers.

"Thought you were ordered here for your health, King. Aren't you leaving rather soon?" asks Mr. Carney.

"Oh, one place is as good as another for that matter, sir. It's the sea-voyage that I need."

"Um—yes, sea-voyages are excellent for some diseases. What was the trouble, King—something about the lungs?"

"No; something about the heart," George answers with great gravity.

"Oh," and Mr. Carney looks into George's face for a minute, and then walks on. Meeting his wife presently, he says, "Kitty, King is spooney on Adelaide, I've found out."

"To be sure he is; that's an old story."

"Oh, it is, eh? Why doesn't he speak up then?"

"Speak up! my dear, are you blind not to see that George is hankering after the girl, and that she doesn't care a button for him?"

"That's it, eh? Well, she'll go further and fare worse in my opinion."

"In my opinion, too; but it's of no use to say anything to Adelaide, she's so headstrong." But nevertheless Mrs. Carney did say something to Adelaide on this subject; and Adelaide met it with this declaration: "But I'm not in love with George King, Mrs. Carney. I like him for a friend very much, but I don't love him."

"I suppose you've got some romantic ideal in your head, Ada."

"I don't know about it's being very romantic; but I suppose every girl has what you call an ideal; that is, she knows what kind of a man would attract her most."

"Did you ever see this man, Ada?"

"No, not exactly"; and Adelaide laughs a little and colors.

"And you never will!" cries Mrs. Carney triumphantly.

A pause ensues while Adelaide counts the stitches in a piece of worsted work she is setting up for Mrs. Carney. Presently Mrs. Carney breaks the pause:

"What kind of a man is he, Adelaide?"

"What man?" asks Adelaide, looking up in astonishment.

"Why, this ideal of yours?"

"Oh!" with some impatience, and then in the "headstrong" way.

"There's one thing—he's a real masculine man, a man's man. I hate women's men!"

"Well, George King is a man's man, as you phrase it, I should think, though he doesn't bluster round like that Major Roberts you girls used to think so much of."

Adelaide's face suddenly flushed a deep, painful red; and Mrs. Carney, who is looking at her, turned away—enlightened. If Adelaide could have *heard* her thought! "So it's that disagreeable Roberts that keeps her from knowing a better man when she sees him!"

The two were in Mrs. Carney's stateroom all this time. When they went on deck a few minutes later, a new acquaintance awaited them—a trifling circumstance enough on many, on most, occasions perhaps, but on this occasion it is destined to be an event which will mark with change the course of two lives at least. The day is lovely—a blue sky, a fresh soft breeze, and the waves dancing in the unclouded sunshine. Under such influences, the sea invalids find their way to the deck, some for the first time. The Carneys are all in a little group together, and George King is with them because Adelaide is with them. He is just saying to Adelaide:

"How fortunate it is for you that you are not sea-sick; if you had been——" and here he stops abruptly, and Adelaide turns to see the cause. He is looking at some one or something away from her, with an expression of absorbed astonishment, and another expression mixed up with the astonishment, which Adelaide cannot fathom. She follows the direction of his eyes, and sees —a pretty, pale girl, leaning on the arm of an elderly gentleman. The next thing, George says absently, "Excuse me a moment," and starts off toward these new-comers. And presently Adelaide sees something else that sets her thinking—a sudden vivid blush upon the pretty pale face which makes it charming—a blush which appeared at the moment that George King appeared before the two. And after what seems to be the most cordial of greetings, George comes running back and addresses himself to Mrs. Carney. Will she permit him to introduce her to some friends of his? They were very kind to him at Hong Kong last year—American residents there like himself—Mr. Maynard and his daughter. Mrs. Carney is "delighted" in her cordial way, and goes off with George, leaning on his arm. In a little while they all come back together to what Mrs. Carney calls "the Carney corner," and Adelaide is introduced to "Mr. Maynard and his daughter." The pretty pale face brightens now and then into positive beauty, and Adelaide very soon perceives that Miss Maynard in health is probably a brilliant girl, both personally and mentally.

"I know you will like each other," George suddenly says in an undertone to Adelaide. "She isn't at her best now, on account of a long illness. They left Hong Kong last year for this reason. A few months after, I heard that she had died at Florence. You can understand my more than amazement on seeing her just now. I believe for a moment I thought it was her ghost," and George laughs in an embarrassed sort of way which is new to him. Adelaide, who is usually the most unobservant person, probably because she is so occupied with those little plans of her, takes note of this embarrassment, and of various other ways that are new to her, before the day is ended. Mrs. Carney has also been observant, which is not so unusual, and that night she comes into the stateroom which Adelaide occupies with Belle Carney, her own small eldest daughter, who is fast asleep, as a little pitcher with very big ears should be—comes in to free her mind, to say in an injured sort of tone:

"Adelaide, that girl is in love with George."

"And what about George, Mrs. Carney?" Adelaide asks with a touch of scorn.

"Well—George acts queerly."

"I should think he did," the touch of scorn deepening. "My opinion is that George *has* been, if he isn't now, as much in love with 'that girl,' as you call her, as she with him; but evidently the course of true love didn't run smoothly—Papa Maynard standing in the way, as a relentless parent, perhaps," and Adelaide repeats George's little confidence about Miss Maynard's illness, her leaving Hong Kong, and the news of her death, not forgetting George's embarrassment at the end. "You see, Mrs. Carney," she concludes, "that George only heard of her incidentally, which to my mind is the indication of the little hitch in the programme of his romance."

"You may be right, Adelaide; but it's very surprising, the whole of it."

"Surprising? Well, I don't know; George is like the rest of his sex, I suppose. He must be making love to somebody. But this pretty well upsets your

theory of Master George's devotion to your humble servant. You discover now how much that is worth—how easily he consoles himself."

"But if you've always discouraged him, Ada—and in these two years, you know, with no hope of you, and this girl near at hand—why, it's perfectly natural——"

"Two years!" Adelaide repeats; and then she confides to Mrs. Carney George's words to her at the little Breton watering place: "*For I've never forgotten what I said two years ago, Miss Ada.*"

"Well, I never!" is Mrs. Carney's emphatic exclamation.

"Not that it makes any difference to me," Adelaide goes on. "It's nothing to me of course whom he makes love to; I'm sure I don't want to have him running after me; I've none of that sort of vanity. But it does make one feel disappointed in human nature to see such uncertainty of purpose in a man."

"So it does, dear," declares Mrs. Carney in sympathetic indignation.

"It was so weak of George to say what he did to me under the circumstances."

"Well, I dare say he believed it was the truth, Ada, *then.* Men are so queer about us women!" Mrs. Carney replies, with an air of wisdom.

"Yes, he believed it, until he suddenly saw the ghost of Miss Maynard, probably. Well, I don't care anything about it, I'm sure. Yes, I do—I do care!" Adelaide bursts out with that quick candor of hers, that honesty of heart which has always made her friends pardon every fault. "I do care! George was my ideal of a friend; he seemed like a rock to me, and I can't have that feeling any more, can I? I've lost my friend; or I never had him, I only had a fancy, that's the truth of it."

"My dear, Jack says"—Jack is Mr. Carney—"that we women are fools about men; that we expect them to be heroes of romance all the time."

"I hate men anyhow!—disagreeable, disappointing creatures, you never know where to find 'em!" Adelaide suddenly snaps out.

Mrs. Carney laughs. "Not so bad as that, Ada, I hope; but I think myself that women are more to be trusted."

The next minute she says good-night, and goes straight to her own stateroom and repeats the entire conversation to Mr. Carney, who exasperates her by going off into shouts of merriment and making certain criticisms and prophecies, which he is informed by his wife are very wide of the mark, and shows that he knows very little of women and their peculiar natures; whereat he laughs again, and provokingly remarks, "Well, we'll see, Kitty—we'll see."

The *Calabria* makes a speedy voyage and a pleasant one. Cloudless skies and soft breezes most of the time bring gay groups upon the deck. None seem to enjoy themselves more than the Carney party. Miss Maynard discovers both wit and humor; her father is full of genial bonhomie; and George comes out so strong as a brilliant talker that Adelaide, who has generally known him only as a listener, looks on in amazement. But Adelaide doesn't enjoy the party. Miss Maynard is too much for her. She confesses to herself that the young lady is cultivated and accomplished. "But all that talk about Hong Kong—I don't see what you can find interesting in it," she remarks to Mrs. Carney, when that lady comments on the delightfulness of this very talk. "I detest personal reminiscences; I always feel left out and lonesome when they are not *my* personal reminiscences; and I think they are in bad taste, too, in general society."

Mrs. Carney, who cannot help finding Miss Maynard charming, says something laughingly to Adelaide about being a dog in the manger. And Adelaide replies in great scorn:

"I'm not a dog in the manger. George may marry her to-morrow for all I care. He isn't my friend any more, as I told you. But Miss Maynard and I are antipathetic; I felt it from the first."

"But, Adelaide, you were so distant from the first."

"I never liked that kind of girl," pursues Adelaide, without taking any heed of Mrs. Carney's suggestion. And Mrs. Carney, as she turns away, says to herself,

"Um, I don't know after all but Jack may be right." But not to Jack does she confide this sudden going-over to his opinion. She keeps it bravely to herself, though that is the dullest work always for Mrs. Carney, who has the keenest relish for "talking things over." She cannot, however, bring herself to face Jack's laugh, and the "I told you so" expression which she knows would dawn in his eyes at her confession. She consoles herself, however, for her silence by the observation which she takes from her new standpoint. And what does she see? She sees Adelaide a little apart, self-withdrawn and silent. She sees George more active than usual in all external ways. He talks a good deal with Miss Maynard and very little with Adelaide, which is quite unlike the old way of things; but this may be the result of circumstances. Adelaide certainly is not very approachable. Several times George has made little overtures, which have been met with anything but encouragement. And there was Miss Maynard smiling and friendly, and with all that background of the Hong Kong life, so fresh in both their minds, the discussion of which was a matter of entertainment to everybody but Adelaide. There was the same invalidism of Miss Maynard, too, which would call out a hundred and one attentions. But underneath all this there was something else, some undercurrent which watchful Mrs. Carney began to feel. George had recovered from his embarrassment; he no longer acted "queerly." But what was it, what link in the past, in those Hong Kong days, which made a present atmosphere of unacknowledged intimacy? Adelaide, sitting wrapped in her waterproof and her silence, feels this atmosphere very sensibly, feels it and rebels against it, all the while she is saying to herself perhaps, "George isn't my friend; it's nothing to me what he does."

But George makes one more venture of friendship. It is just as the journey comes to an end, and they are all about to separate. He leaves Miss Maynard to her father then, and resolutely attaches himself to Adelaide, attending her with his usual unobtrusive courtesy, until he seats her in the carriage.

"You'll come and see us soon," says good-natured Mrs. Carney, leaning out of the window as the carriage drives away. And just as George is lifting his hat to them, another carriage whirls by, and Miss Maynard's voice cries out, shrill and gay: "At the Fifth Avenue! remember, Mr. King."

"Hong Kong must be a good school for familiarity of manners, I should say," Adelaide remarks snappishly, drawing down her veil.

Mrs. Carney bethinks herself of Adelaide's old free-and-easiness in ordering George about, and says nothing. And Adelaide, fatuous young woman, congratulates herself as she goes up to her room that night that she has turned her back upon her *bête noire*—that forward Miss Maynard. But, alas for these self-congratulations! Before a month has transpired, Miss Maynard is a frequent visitor at Mrs. Carney's, Mrs. Carney having taken one of her great fancies for that young lady. And so the old shipboard society meets again without a break, but with a variety which makes a great difference to Adelaide, for of this variety there is one man of whom we have heard before—the Major Roberts of Mrs. Carney's detestation. This gentleman has the kind of good looks that men's men, like Jack Carney, call "showy," and women, especially quite young women, speak of as "so fascinating!" and "a Guy Livingston sort of man, you know." It is needless to dilate upon this gentleman's popularity in feminine circles. We all of us know how fascinating to the ordinary feminine fancy is the Guy Livingston type of man, or a faint resemblance to that type. Adelaide, it would appear from Mrs. Carney's hints, has long ago succumbed to this fascination, and it would appear also, from the nature of these hints, that she may have been in some sort a victim—one of those upon whom the king smiled but to ride away. And this is not far from the fact. Two or three years ago Adelaide had met Major Roberts, and been the recipient of his attentions until he had been ordered away on a foreign cruise. Perhaps before he sailed the girl had discovered that she was only one of Major Roberts's "friends." But this

discovery seemed to cast no discredit upon Major Roberts in her estimation; to take nothing from the glamour with which he was invested. He had never committed himself. He had only looked now and then unfathomable things from his handsome dark eyes; had, in fact, just evaded decided responsible love-making, and thus cleverly contrived to leave himself entirely free from responsible intentions, without losing the admiration of the girl he so successfully "left behind him." If you had told Adelaide that she was in love with Major Roberts, she would have scouted the accusation indignantly, but she would color and her heart would beat in answering you. The truth of the matter was, no doubt, that she was in love with love, and Major Roberts, with his handsome figure, his fine eyes, and great splendid dark beard, seemed to represent her ideal, to embody her fancy. And now here he was back again from his two years' cruise, with a bronze tinge to his brilliant complexion, which enhanced his Guy Livingston style wonderfully; here he was back, and at his old tricks again, said indignant Mrs. Carney as she noted his *dévoué* attentions to Adelaide—"attentions which mean nothing, just nothing at all!" the little woman indignantly explained to her husband. And what was her astonishment when her husband responded:

"But I am not so sure of that, Kitty. When Roberts was hanging round two years ago, he hadn't a dollar besides his pay, and now, my dear Mrs. Carney, Mr. Lothario has rather a nice fortune which his father left him last year."

"You don't say so!" exclaims Mrs. Carney; and then she goes on, "but how will that alter matters with such a selfish fellow?"

"Well, the selfish fellow can afford to please himself."

Mrs. Carney was silent in meditation. If this was true, here was the very opportunity that Adelaide had always desired—the rich man whom she could love. But if it *was* true, what of Jack's little theory?—and with a small spice of triumph she puts this question to Jack himself. But Jack only laughs and quotes,

There's many a slip;

and so the conversation ends. But not so do Mrs. Carney's speculations and observations end. Keeping a sharp lookout after her sociable fashion, she sees that "there is something in" Jack's idea, for she sees that Major Roberts's attentions to Adelaide at this time have a certain quality of earnestness that they have never had before. And all this time there is George King coming and going, and Miss Maynard also a constant visitor. To Mrs. Carney, who had planned her own little programme, this was a game of cross purposes; yet even now she could not make Adelaide out. The girl did not seem to be conscious of a change in Major Roberts. Her manner to him was as it had been almost from the first of this second meeting—a queer union of gay excitement and irritability. Mrs. Carney, always a match-maker, wonders at this crisis if she hadn't better have a little talk with Adelaide and enlighten her, perhaps; "for the girl, I believe, thinks he is fooling with her in the old fashion," she says to Jack. But Jack Carney replies like the man of sense he is:

"You just let things work their own way, little woman."

It would seem that others besides Jack Carney have noted and commented upon Major Roberts's earnestness in his present pursuit; for one day an old admirer of Adelaide's, meeting Mr. Carney, says: "So Roberts is going to range himself, eh, as our French friends would express it,—going to marry the little Payne girl? Nice girl, and a very nice thing for her; don't you think so?"

"Well, I don't know—I dare say it's a nice thing for Roberts."

"Oh, you don't like Roberts, eh?"

"Yes, I like Roberts well enough, but I don't think this ranging of his, as you call it, is a particularly nice thing for the little Payne girl."

The young man laughs and goes away to tell his friends that Jack Carney doesn't think much of Roberts. About the time that this conversation is taking place, Major Roberts is leaving the Carney mansion after rather a prolonged interview with Miss Payne. Mrs.

Carney is on the *qui vive* upstairs; for didn't Major Roberts, on entering the library and finding her in possession, say to her with a significant smile that he should like to see Miss Payne alone and uninterrupted for a few moments, thus plainly indicating his errand, and his own confidence in the result? But Adelaide does not immediately leave the library after Major Roberts's exit. Minute after minute goes by, until the little clock on the shelf has struck the half hour twice. Mrs. Carney can stand it no longer. Perhaps Ada is shy; perhaps she is afraid that Mr. Carney is upstairs; and so fraudulently fortifying herself, Mrs. Carney goes down to the library.

"Well, Ada," she says gayly, "why didn't you come up and tell me the good news? I've been waiting a whole hour for you!" Ada turns her face from the window. What a curious look there is upon it, and what a curious tone in her voice as she says:

"I had nothing to tell, Mrs. Carney."

"Nothing to tell!" and Mrs. Carney in a few unguarded sentences, in her usual reckless fashion, lets out her own little interview with Major Roberts and its significance to her.

Then Adelaide finds her tongue, and a red flush comes into her pale cheek at the same time.

"If Major Roberts advertises his confidence like this, then I am certainly justified in saying that Major Roberts made a mistake, and that I was not to be had, as he thought, for his asking."

"What! you don't mean to say, Adelaide, that you have rejected Major Roberts?"

"And why not, pray? Better men than Major Roberts have been rejected!"

"But I thought—I supposed——"

"Yes, I know you thought, and everybody, Major Roberts included, thought that I should only be too happy to pick up the Sultan's handkerchief whenever he pleased to throw it; but you're all mistaken."

"But, Adelaide, after our conversation——"

"I never said I liked Major Roberts, never!" interrupted Adelaide, passion vibrating in her tones.

"I'm not alluding to Major Roberts particularly now; I was thinking of our conversations about money. Major Roberts, you know, has come into a fortune lately."

"Yes, I know, but I never meant that I could marry a man without loving him, and I don't love Major Roberts—I don't even like him now. I did think once, two or three years ago—well, I did think that I was—that he was a sort of hero. But since I've seen him this time I've found out my mistake. Oh, Mrs. Carney, I've been such a fool! Girls *are* such fools! To think I should have admired him. He is so vain, so—artificial! not a man's man at all, as I thought him."

"Well, I'm glad you've found him out, Ada. I never could understand how you girls could be so deceived by that grand manner. But I must say I think you've been playing rather fast and loose, Ada, for you've certainly encouraged Major Roberts until everybody thought there'd be but one end to the matter."

"I haven't encouraged him, Mrs. Carney; I never thought he meant anything serious until to-day."

"What in the world *could* you be thinking of, then? Everybody else has seen how in earnest he was."

"Have they? Well, much good may it do them," Adelaide replies irritably.

Mrs. Carney is certainly an amiable woman. She looks a moment at Adelaide, as if turning over something in her mind, and then, instead of keeping up the irritating subject, says kindly:

"Come out for a drive with me, Ada; it will do you good."

It is a lovely day, the air full of warmth and brightness, and not a cloud to be seen in the April sky. So sweet is the influence of all this warmth and brightness, this tender atmosphere, that Adelaide's vexed spirit yields to it involuntarily, and something of a girl's hope and lightness comes into her heart and shines out upon her face at last.

"It really has done you good, Ada. I haven't seen you looking like this for a long time," says Mrs. Carney, pleasantly exultant over the effect of her prescription.

They are just returning to the city as Mrs. Carney says this, and Adelaide is on the point of responding, of confessing how much good she has gained, when a shrill, clear voice cries out:

"Oh, Mrs. Carney, Miss Payne, how do you do? Won't you come in?"

Adelaide turns her head in the direction from whence the voice proceeds, and sees Miss Maynard leaning over the gate, which shuts in a pretty green lawn, and at her side stands George King. The coachman is ordered to pull up for a moment—just long enough for Mrs. Carney to ask about the new house, and if Mr. Maynard likes to be so far out—if they have got settled yet, etc.; and then Miss Maynard, as they move off, says in a quick, happy way:

"I am coming to see you very soon, Mrs. Carney—to see you and to bring you a piece of news." And as she speaks, she moves her hand to her face. Perhaps it is to hide the rising blush in her cheeks, but at the moment there shines and sparkles out to them a ray of light and fire from a solitaire diamond.

"A great, impudent diamond, Jack," is Mrs. Carney's curious description as she tells her story of the day to her husband that evening. "And she looked so detestably happy, Jack, I couldn't bear her!" And Jack laughs, as he always does, at Mrs. Carney's queer little turns, and puts her in a corner by saying:

"Thought you were a great friend of Mary Maynard's, Kitty?"

"I like Mary Maynard very well, but I always had a feeling that she had laid herself out to catch George, and I hate that kind of girl," is Mrs. Carney's contradictory reply.

"I see—you had made a new plan to marry George and Adelaide, the moment you found out she'd given Roberts the go-by; and Mary Maynard has upset this plan; and you know, Kate, nothing ever vexes you like the upsetting of any of your little beneficent plans for other people's felicity."

"Well, Jack, there's one thing: if your little theory——" What more Mrs. Carney would have said

will never be known, for at this point a servant interrupts her with the message that Miss Maynard and Mr. King are downstairs.

"Did they ask for Miss Payne, Ann?"

"Yes'm, and I spoke to her as I come along, but she says she's a headache and will be excused, if you please."

"Where is she, Ann?"

"In the school-room, ma'am."

The school-room, as it is called, where Adelaide teaches the little Carneys, is at the extreme end of the house. It is a large room, cheerful enough when the sunshine is pouring in at the southwest windows, but looking very dismal as Adelaide sits there by a single low light, and a little chilly fire in a wide grate. But it has the virtue of being out of the way of everybody and everybody's noise, and thus a very fitting place for a person suffering with headache. But even at this isolated distance, Adelaide can catch now and then a faint, far sound of laughter from the drawing-room. In vain she tries to fix her mind upon Miss Thackeray's pretty story of "Elizabeth," which she has brought up from the library; for it seems she does not find her headache so severe as to exclude her from reading, or at least an attempt at it. But it is merely an attempt, not on account of the headache, but on account of her wandering thoughts. The Caroline Gilmore of Miss Thackeray's story turns into Miss Maynard as she reads —Miss Maynard, who has taken her friend away. John Dampier gets mixed up with George King, and Major Roberts and Elly, poor Elly—for she is in the midst of Elly's troubles—poor Elly suggests her own forlornness; only Elly's case is nothing so bad as hers, as the saddest of written stories seem tame to our own stories when we are living them. By and by, over the laughter there comes a sound of music; there are the gay notes of the piano, and somebody is singing. It is Miss Maynard's far-reaching soprano, which her admirers have likened to Parepa's dulcet tones. But Adelaide shivers as she listens. She has never liked Miss Maynard, and she hears no sweetness in her voice. She makes another attempt to follow the story of "Eliza-

beth," instead of her own. She turns the page and begins to read of Elly's good friend, Miss Dampier, and straightway her thought flies back to herself as she thinks of Miss Dampier's sympathy and her own desolation. If only she had such a wise friend! Mrs. Carney is kind, but not like that sweet, motherly Miss Dampier, to whom poor Elly could confess everything —all her foolishness and sorrow. And just at this point in her comparison a door opens somewhere in the upper hall, and the words of Hatton's pretty ballad, "Good by, sweetheart," come up to her full and clear, in Miss Maynard's ringing voice. The next instant the song is shut out again, but somebody is coming down the long corridor leading to the school-room. It is very unkind in Mrs. Carney to send for her, Adelaide thinks, as the footsteps draw nearer, and some one knocks for admission. But it is not a servant who enters at her "Come in." She looks up quickly, and sees—George King. A little flush of angry surprise rises into Adelaide's face, which deepens as George speaks:

"Mrs. Carney sends me up to tell you Miss Maynard's news, Miss Ada."

Adelaide can find no words to reply, and George goes on. He is telling her rather a long story, she thinks, about Miss Maynard, and Hong Kong, and a young German whom Miss Maynard didn't like. It is all very queer and confusing to Adelaide; she can't follow half of it, until at the end George says, with a laugh:

"But it is all right now. Von Raden has been promoted for his gallant conduct in the war, and Mr. Maynard can hold out no longer."

"Von Raden? what has he to do with Miss Maynard?" asks Adelaide, bewildered.

George laughs outright.

"Well, I always knew I was a bad hand at telling a story. Von Raden, Miss Ada, is the lover of the piece."

"And you, George?"

"And I, Miss Ada, am the faithful friend of all parties —of Von Raden especially, who is an exceedingly good fellow, in spite of Mr. Maynard's prejudices against a foreigner. He will be here in the next steamer, Miss

Ada, and then you will have a chance of seeing a very handsome young officer of the Prussian army."

"George, was it this secret about the Prussian officer which made you and Miss Maynard blush and look so queerly when you met on board the *Calabria?*"

George blushes again at this question; but he laughs at the same time, while he answers:

"No, it wasn't the secret about the Prussian officer; it was because Mr. Maynard had taken it into his head that I was a safer man than the Prussian."

"He wanted you to marry his daughter!"

"He didn't want her to marry the Prussian, Miss Ada," George replies modestly. "And it wasn't until Miss Maynard gave me her entire confidence about the Prussian—which she did on the *Calabria*—that we were either of us quite free from embarrassment when we met, for we had both been made aware of Mr. Maynard's little plans in regard to us."

"And I thought it was you who were Miss Maynard's lover all this time, and I hated her, George!" cried Adelaide with sudden reckless impulse.

George is leaning against the mantel, but at this, he starts forward, and looks eagerly into Adelaide's face.

"Thought it was I, Miss Ada?"

"And I hated her, George!" Adelaide repeats irrelevantly.

Down goes George on one knee beside the little low chair, that he may get a better view of the occupant. "Adelaide, do you mean——" he begins; and Adelaide, with a great bright flush coloring her cheeks, answers honestly:

"Yes, George, I mean that I hated Mary Maynard for —for your sake. I mean that I've been a fool, George, all these years. I mean that I was so used to having you for my friend that I didn't know, until I thought that Mary Maynard was taking my friend away, that——" but Adelaide's vehement confession has spent itself, and the rest of the sentence is inarticulate upon George's coat-collar, and with George's arm about her. And George is quite content to ask no further questions at that moment, for he has got his heart's desire.

"So you were right in your little theory after all, Jack." Jack gives rather a sleepy yawn; and no wonder, for Mrs. Carney, just returned from a midnight interview with Adelaide, has awakened him from his first sleep to tell him her great news.

"My little theory?" he mutters sleepily. "Oh, that Adelaide is in love with King. I thought that was settled some time ago. I thought it was King you weren't sure of—I thought——"

"Jack, you're talking in your sleep. Didn't you hear me tell you that it's all settled between Ada and George?"

"Is it? Well, I am very glad something is settled for that foolish girl you and King are so fond of." And with these words, Jack Carney turns his face to the wall, and goes back to the dreams that Mrs. Carney has so ruthlessly interrupted.

In the days that follow, while there is much rejoicing in the house of Carney over this foolish girl, the dear discerning world, with its usual sagacity, hits the nail on the head in this wise:

So, Adelaide Payne is going to marry a poor man, after all. Such grasping ambition as hers always ends in this way. She tried to catch Major Roberts, you know, and didn't succeed, poor thing! so now she takes up with that red-headed George King.

This clever comedy by Léon de Tinseau (translated for ROMANCE by M. A. Burnley) is the second in our group of Society Sketches. In it, Miles Standish and his fascinating proxy appear in modern French costume; but though John Alden succumbed, and so did General Garfield in a political crisis of similar import, so did not the honorable hero of our story. One must admit that he could not plead that he did not understand the sentiments of the lady. She probably felt it necessary to make them rather plain. Indeed, what is a woman to do in such a case?

BETWEEN DOG AND WOLF.

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT.

Dramatis Personæ.

DIANE DE LIMEUIL, a young widow aged twenty-seven.
A MAID.
GUY DE LUSTRAC, a bachelor, aged thirty-two.
(In Paris at the present time.)

The scene represents a very elegant little boudoir, containing a great many low, cushioned chairs, screens, plants, and tables loaded with objects of virtu. At the back, a fireplace and chimney-piece with a clock, and with a thermometer hanging near the glass. On the right, a sofa. On the left, an empty arm-chair. Twilight begins to fall.

SCENE I.

Diane, then the Maid.

Diane (she is half-reclining on the sofa and seems to be in a revery).—Ah! Heaven! This afternoon has seemed interminable to me! What time can it be? (She stretches herself nervously and rings.)

Maid (entering).—Madame rang?

Diane.—Bring the lamp. I can no longer see to read.

Maid.—Very well, Madame. (Going.)

Diane.—However, not yet. Have I had visitors?

Maid.—A few, Madame.

Diane.—You said that I was unwell?

Maid (concealing a slight irony under an appearance of profound respect).—I have said that Madame has a frightful headache.

Diane (sitting up and shrugging her shoulders).—Who told you to say frightful? How little intelligence you have! I said that I would receive in case any one insisted. But naturally if you report that I am in agony—(in a softer tone) no one has insisted?

Maid.—I beg pardon, Madame.

Diane (quickly).—Ah! you see! and who, may I ask?

Maid.—Madame la Baronne de Vernantes, but I thought——

Diane.—Oh! my dear, how well you did! She would have killed me with her rasping voice. Who else has been here?

Maid (aside, offended).—Ah! I have no intelligence. (Aloud) The cards are in the antechamber if Madame wishes to see them.

Diane.—Oh! no—try to remember. (Maid pretends to rack her memory.) Let me see, has Madame de Tantaval come? (Negative sign.) Madame de Pontusson?

Maid.—She came.

Diane.—Madame de St. Armel?

Maid.—She came also.

Diane (pretending to search her memory).—Monsieur —Monsieur de Lustrac?

Maid (aside, wishing to revenge herself).—Ah! here we are at last. (Aloud) Monsieur le Marquis de Lustrac? Let me see. (She also pretends to be trying to remember.)

Diane.—Well?

Maid (aside).—I am nothing but a fool. (Aloud) He may have been——

Diane (with annoyance).—You have certainly a very short memory, Mademoiselle. Go get the cards. (Maid goes out.) It was hardly worth while to close my door to everybody in order to secure his tête-à-tête, judging by the way he takes advantage of it. (The clock strikes six.)

Maid (bringing the cards).—Monsieur le Marquis has

not called. I confounded him with Monsieur de Pragnier.

Diane (shrugging her shoulders). — A fine resemblance! What hour has just struck? Six? (Aside) I shall not see him this evening.

Maid (softening).—Oh! that clock is twenty minutes fast.

Diane.—Do you think so? (Affirmative sign.) Well, I will rest a little. That is all.

Maid (aside).—Good! she is reconciled, provided Monsieur de Lustrac comes. (Goes out.)

Diane (she seats herself in the arm-chair and pokes the fire in silence).—Am I quite ridiculous? (She rises and leans on the mantel.) But, really, every man who comes near me is more or less interested in me, and even to count carefully (she counts on her fingers), I might find three or four who are a little more than interested—one even who has an insupportable mania for wishing to marry me, in spite of wind and tide. One single man pays me no attention, or at least he treats me as a "good comrade," which is worse,—and precisely that man—(she stamps her foot angrily)—I cannot help it—I think only of him! It is the spirit of contradiction in women. (More softly, with feeling.) If I could only be sure that the spirit of contradiction alone is responsible! (She leans her forehead on her hand and sighs.)

Scene II.

Diane, the Maid, then Guy.

Maid.—Monsieur le Marquis de Lustrac asks if Madame la Comtesse will receive him?

Diane.—You told him I have a headache?

Maid.—Yes, Madame.

Diane (with ill-concealed satisfaction).—And Monsieur le Marquis insisted?

Maid.—Insisted very hard, Madame, so I thought I might——

Diane (quickly).—Very well—let him come in. (The maid goes out. Diane arranges her hair, returns to the sofa, and takes a position indicative of suffering.)

Guy (entering).—You have a headache?

Diane.—Ah! I am suffering martyrdom!

Guy.—I ought not to have come in then. It is not my fault—I was going away—but your maid offered to inquire if you were better and——

Diane (much vexed).—In short, that simpleton made you come in against your will. Say so at once.

Guy.—Well, you seem to be in a fine humor this evening.

Diane.—I would like to give you my headache to see for a while what sort of humor you would be in.

Guy.—Oh! as to that—you will give me your headache. (He consults the thermometer.) Twenty degrees Reaumur; and such violent perfumes! (He gasps for breath.)

Diane (holding out one of her gloves to him).—You don't like this odor? (M. de Lustrac, having assured himself that he is not observed, kisses the glove with passionate tenderness.)

Guy (returning the glove very coldly).—No.

Diane (rather sadly).—And yet you brought it to me from the Orient. You don't remember it? (He makes a sign that he does not.) Well, my poor friend, go away if you fear being ill.

Guy (seating himself in the arm-chair).—My dear Madame, when I was visiting the Indies three years ago, the cholera was carrying off several thousands of persons every day—that did not make me leave one hour sooner.

Diane (ironically).—Indeed! you are decidedly not to be frightened by scourges. Only, as you are going to stay, please ring for a lamp. This half-obscurity is not entirely proper.

Guy.—Oh! not proper—with any one else perhaps. But with a good comrade such as I am—(Madame de Limeuil makes a gesture of annoyance)—Come! you don't agree with me. At any rate, I know no hour for talking to be compared with the one called "Between dog and wolf."

Diane.—That depends very much on the subject of the conversation. Generally, I like to see the faces of

people who are talking to me. And then—"Between dog and wolf"—(she shudders slightly)—these sinister words always give me a chill. I seem to see a great beast with pointed ears and long teeth and eyes glittering in the obscurity.

Guy (forgetting himself a little).—Yes, that does for the wolf. But the dog—the dog, so vigilant, so faithful, ready to die for the protection of her whom he loves, asking nothing but a poor little caress from time to time! (Madame de Limeuil, slightly moved, extends her hand to him, which he presses, resisting the desire to kiss it.)

Diane.—It goes without saying that that disinterested animal is your prototype, according to your account.

Guy (standing before the fire).—Don't you think so?

Diane.—That you are a model of the species? No, indeed! You have only one idea in your head, and that is to have me devoured by the wolf.

Guy (trying to understand).—"Devoured by the wolf?" Ah! you are speaking of that poor Roger d'Oncieux whom you are causing to die of grief.

Diane (imitating M. de Lustrac).—"That poor Roger d'Oncieux!" One would think him overwhelmed by an unjust fate because I did not faint with joy at the idea of being Madame Roger d'Oncieux from his first word!

Guy.—Oh! "from his first word!" We did not demand so much. But it is now eighteen months since that first word, and you are still a widow!

Diane (yawning).—My dear Monsieur de Lustrac, if you please, give me a holiday for to-day. You are a charming "comrade," a skilful rhetorician, and by your wit and intelligence you communicate an interest to the most unpromising subjects. But, frankly, in your almost daily visits——

Guy (hastily).—If you think I come too often.

Diane (in the same tone).—Oh! no—(More coldly) You did not understand me. Continue your visits. But if you could sometimes talk of something else besides the wonderful love your friend feels for me!

Guy.—He is the best of men; he would be just the husband to suit you. He adores you (becoming ani-

mated) with a sort of fear, as we adore the Almighty Being who can by a word make the happiness or misery of our lives. (With restrained passion) You are so fascinating and so beautiful!

Diane (astonished).—Ah!

Guy (resuming his composure).—That is the way he speaks of you.

Diane (ironically).—Ah! it is your friend who speaks. I am extremely obliged to him.

Guy.—But when he is in your presence the poor fellow becomes incapable of uttering a sentence which has even common sense.

Diane.—And to compensate himself he assassinates me with letters.

Guy.—In certain cases it is better to write——

Diane.—Especially, when there is a jealous confidant on the ground to read the prose of the absent one and exalt his incendiary qualities. Do you think your manœuvres escape me? Listen, shall I tell you? Well, your friend is an imbecile!

Guy.—Why?

Diane.—I understand——

Guy (sighing).—Ah! I understand how some women render everybody imbecile who approaches them!

Diane.—It is evident that I have no part or lot with these "some women," for you retain perfectly your strength of mind in my presence.

Guy.—Pooh! I don't count. I am a savage——

Diane.—A savage! You were not so savage at one time with Madame d'Ingrande.

Guy (begins to walk up and down, his hands in his pockets).—It was not the same thing.

Diane (leaning on her elbow).—Ah! yes. She was irresistible—while I——

Guy (still walking).—Don't be ill-natured! You know very well that you have made ten times as many victims as Madame d'Ingrande.

Diane.—Only she realized better than I your ideal type—that is what you mean. Great Heaven! These things ought not to be discussed.

Guy (stopping before Madame de Limeuil and becom-

ing more and more animated as he speaks).—Madame d'Ingrande does not approach you in beauty, still less in wit and intelligence. As to elegance and natural charm I would not even compare you one to the other. Your every movement is grace. You are more than a fascinating woman—you are fascination itself——

Diane (astonished).—Ah!

Guy (not listening, lets his arms fall with an air of discouragement, gazes before him into vacancy, and murmurs as if to himself).—Unfortunately——!

Diane (observing him).—There is a *but.* You have discovered some physical or moral monstrosity in me which chills you.

Guy (sitting down and poking the fire).—If I had discovered what you say, do you think that I would have undertaken as I have the candidacy of my best friend, more than a friend? I know no name to describe the devotion I feel for this brave heart.

Diane (very animated and sitting up).—Here it is again! I beg you let us quit the subject of Monsieur d'Oncieux, and be kind enough to explain to me why you said just now (imitating him) "Unfortunately."

Guy.—If you expect to cure your headache by putting your nerves in such a state——

Diane.—The best means of calming them is to answer me.

Guy.—I don't remember what I meant—we were talking of Madame d'Ingrande.

Diane.—And you added, speaking of me, "It is not the same thing."

Guy.—Don't trouble yourself. If there is a difference between you two, it is not to her advantage.

Diane.—Yes, it is, for she subjugated you, while I am a "good comrade" to you.

Guy (rising).—But this is monstrous! Here I am obliged to be in love with you!

Diane (rising).—No, but you are obliged to tell me what special reason you have for not being.

Guy.—Very well then! I am in love with you. There! Does that satisfy you?

Diane.—No trifling! Just now, after a flattering tirade

in relation to me, you said (imitating him) "Unfortunately!" What does that mean? Answer, or everything is at an end between us.

Guy.—If any one heard you, he might think something was about to begin.

Diane.—Good-by, Monsieur de Lustrac. If you go away to travel, please take your friend with you, your incomparable Roger d'Oncieux——

Guy (falling into a chair with an air of lassitude).—Ah! he is truly incomparable.

Diane (stamping her foot).—Again!

Guy.—But the deuce! If you wish me to speak, give me time to explain myself. (Diane sits down.) Roger loves you madly. (She shrugs her shoulders.) It is not my fault, is it? He is ridiculously modest and timid. That is not my fault either. And with all that, jealous, as all lovers are——

Diane.—He undertook to be jealous very early. And then——

Guy.—Then, knowing that you permit me to see you often——

Diane.—Oh! well, if that would give him any pleasure, I could give you a certificate that you have never walked in his footsteps.

Guy.—That did not prevent his being very uneasy. I have seen the time when he would have liked to cut my throat.

Diane.—Useless massacre! And then?

Guy.—Then, I did what you would have done in my place. I swore to him, on my honor, that—I would always be a brother to you.

Diane (exasperated, but controlling herself).—Really! You did that? (A silence.) Very well! politeness for politeness. You can tell him from me, that from all appearances I shall always be a sister to him.

Guy.—I cannot execute the commission this evening; he is at home in the country.

Scene III.

The Same. The Maid.

Maid (enters and presents a letter to her mistress on a tray).—Madame's mail.

Diane (taking the letter and laying it on the table).—Very well. (The maid is going.)

Guy (aside).—It is perhaps from him. (Aloud to Madame de Limeuil) You do not wish a lamp?

Maid.—In a moment, Monsieur le Marquis.

Diane (severely).—Monsieur le Marquis will permit me to tell you in his presence, Mademoiselle, that you are in my service, and not in his. You will bring the lamp when I ring.

Maid (aside, after looking with pity at the two persons).—Nevertheless, to see clearly is what those two need. And it is on me that Madame expends her nerves. (Goes out.)

SCENE IV.

Guy. Diane.

Guy (after a silence).—You are not curious to see who is writing to you?

Diane (aside).—With what pleasure I could beat him! (Aloud, fingering the letter) Your heart does not tell you? (ironically.) It is from *him!* From the only being you love in the world, from Roger d'Oncieux.

Guy.—How do you know?

Diane.—Oh! do not trouble yourself,—it is not by my heart. I feel the seal under my finger. Your friend is the only man in France who still uses wax to close his letters.

Guy.—I hope you will give me news of him before I leave you.

Diane (ironically).—What! you do not see him every day?

Guy.—I have had the honor to tell you that he is in the country. He has not written to me since his departure.

Diane (in the same tone).—Then I can understand your anguish. I will soften it. Ring for a light. (He presses the button.) But first please answer me a last question—simply as a psychological study (carefully preparing her sentence). Since you have been working for the happiness of another, heaven knows with what noble disinterestedness! you have never—regretted one single time—that you were not working for yourself?

(M. de Lustrac sits down and takes up the tongs. At the same instant the maid brings a lamp, puts it on the table, pulls down the shades and goes out—all in silence.) Come, answer me. I promise never again to bore you with my psychology.

Guy (still poking the fire).—Well, that is a question! You would do wisely not to put it to everybody.

Diane.—But in the first place I can only put it to you, as you are alone in this case. Then do you think I would remain for half-an-hour with "everybody" in a half-lighted room? What were you saying just now? It is precisely because you are not everybody that you interest me and I try to study you. I try to discover why it is that you are less—suppose we say less foolish than other people. Come! I am listening.

Guy (after a short silence).—I am going to answer you by an apologue. You pass every day through the Rue de la Paix. When you see the sapphires and pearls in the shop-windows, do you think of putting them in your pocket?

Diane (emphatically).—Indeed, I most certainly do!

Guy (concealing his trouble by a tone of ordinary gallantry).—Well, my apologue turns against me. It was badly chosen, besides, for the most precious stones were made for your beauty, while I should be the wildest of madmen to lift my dream to the Comtesse de Limeuil, aside from any oath.

Diane (at first very serious, then affecting to laugh).—Very well! I am answered. Great Heaven! what a pretty madrigal! Ha, ha, ha! And what modesty! Ha, ha, ha! It is enough to make one die of laughter. (Her voice changes and she begins to sob in her handkerchief. M. de Lustrac, distracted, looks at her, struggling with himself not to fall at her feet.) I beg your pardon. (She wipes her eyes quickly.) This wretched headache has put my nerves in such a state! And then this is what it is to talk "between dog and wolf." (She hands the letter to Guy.) Here, my friend, take for yourself the news which interests you. (M. de Lustrac hesitates.) Oh! there is no indiscretion. You are his confidant, and my brother. Come, read!

Guy (reading aloud).—"Madame, when you receive these lines, I shall no longer be"——(He stops abruptly.)

Diane (frightened).—Great Heaven! Has he killed himself?

Guy (much troubled).—No. (He continues to read to himself, and suddenly falls at Madame de Limeuil's feet.) Oh! Diane! how I love you! and how long it has been!

Diane (confounded).—You love me?—You?

Guy.—She did not see it.

Diane (quite simply in a low voice).—I thought I saw it more than once, but to-day I was sure I had deceived myself. When one talks in such fine phrases it is always with a heart perfectly free.

Guy (covering Madame de Limeuil's hand with kisses).—And that is what made you weep! Oh, precious tears!

Diane (withdrawing her hand).—You are losing your head, Monsieur. You forget the jewellers' windows—that is to say, your oath to Roger d'Oncieux.

Guy (rising and resuming the reading of the letter).—Listen to what he writes:

"When you receive these lines, I shall no longer be in France. In the solitude to which I retired I have been able to reflect, and I have seen clearly. You will never love me because you love another. Lustrac will tell you the name of this happy man. Poor, excellent friend, I am writing to him by this same mail, to give him back a certain parole he had given me." (During the reading Madame de Limeuil has risen and approached M. de Lustrac to read at the same time. At the last words, he passes his arm gently around the young woman's waist.)

Diane (repulsing him with indignation).—Monsieur! Who gave you permission?

Guy.—Oh! Diane! I love you so much! Forgive me!

Diane.—Never! Never will I forgive you for not having been false to your oath!

Guy.—My dear, beloved wife.

(*The curtain falls.*)

Miserable Wibberley! "But," the American reader will reflect, "there was no need of his suffering such pangs. Only an Englishman would have so wretchedly yielded. An American would have cut the Gordian knot in an instant by——" But it would be unkindness to "give away" the kernel of this ingenious story,—the third in our group of Society Tales. "Lady Linacre's Bracelet" (the name of the author is unknown) first appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*.

LADY LINACRE'S BRACELET.

On a morning early in the spring of last year, two men stood leaning against the mantelpiece of a room in one of the Government offices. The taller of the two—he who was at home in the room—was a slim, well-dressed man, wearing his hair parted exactly in the middle, and a diamond pin in the sailor knot of his tie. He had his frock coat open and his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat. The attitude denoted complacency, and the man was complacent.

"Well, the funny part of it is," he was saying lightly, his shoulders pressed against the mantelpiece, "that I am dining at the Burton Smiths' this evening!"

"Ah?" his companion answered, looking up at him with eyes of envy. "And so you will see her?"

"Of course. She is to come to them to-day. But they do not know about our engagement yet, and as she does not want to blurt it out the moment she arrives—why, for this evening, it will be a secret. Still I thought I would tell you."

He stepped away as he spoke, to straighten a red morocco-covered dispatch box standing on the table behind him. It bore, besides the flaunting gilt capitals "I. O.," a modest plate with the name "Ernest Wibberley"—his name.

The other waited until he resumed his place. Then he answered, holding out his hand, "Yes, I am glad you told me, old boy; and I congratulate you most heartily, believe me."

"Thank you, Jack," Wibberley replied. "I knew you would. I rather feel myself that 'Fate cannot harm me. I have dined to-day.'"

"Happy dog!" said Jack, and presently disappeared.

The Burton Smiths, whom we heard them mention, are tolerably well known in London. Burton Smith himself is a barrister, with money and many relations—Irish landlords, Scotch members, Indian Judges, and the like. His wife is young, gracious, and fond of society. Their drawing-rooms on the topmost flat of Onslow Mansions—rooms with sloping ceilings and a dozen quaint nooks and corners—are seldom empty during the regulation hours.

This particular dinner-party had been planned with some care. "Lady Linacre will come, no doubt," Mrs. Burton Smith had said one day at breakfast, conning a list she held in her hand, "and Mr. May."

But Burton Smith objected to May. "He will talk about nothing but India," he protested, "and the superiority of Calcutta over London. A little of these Bombay ducks goes a long way, my dear."

"Well, James," Mrs. Burton Smith replied placidly—the Hon. Vereker May is a son of Lord Hawthorn—"he will take me in, and I do not mind. Only I must have Mr. Wibberley on the other side to make conversation and keep me alive. Let me see—that will be three. And Joanna Burton—she comes that afternoon—four. Do you know, James, when we were at Temple Rothley for Christmas, I thought there was something between your cousin and Mr. Wibberley?"

"Then, for goodness' sake, do not let them sit together!" Burton Smith cried, "or they will talk to one another and to no one else."

"Very well," Mrs. Smith assented. "They shall sit opposite to one another, and Mr. Wibberley shall take in Mrs. Galantine. She will be sure to flirt with him, and we can watch Joanna's face. I shall soon see if there is anything between them."

Mr. Wibberley was a young man of some importance, if only in his capacity of private secretary to a Minister. He had a thousand acquaintances, and certainly two

friends—perhaps three. He might be something some day—was bound to be. He dressed well, looked well, and talked well. He was a little presumptuous, perhaps even a trifle conceited; but women like these things in young men, and he had infinite tact. At any rate, he had never yet found himself in a place too strait for him.

This evening as he dressed for dinner—as he brushed his hair vigorously or paused to smile at some reflection—his own, but not in the glass—he was in his happiest mood. Everything seemed to be going well with him. He had no presentiment of evil. He was going to a house where he was appreciated. Mrs. Burton Smith was a great ally of his. And then there would be, as we know, some one else. Happy man!

"Lady Linacre," said his hostess as she introduced him to a stout personage with white hair, a double chin, and diamonds. Wibberley bowed, making up his mind that the dowager was one of those ladies with strong prejudices, who draw their skirts together if you prove a Home Ruler, and leave the room if you mention Sir Charles Dilke. "Mr. May, you have met before," Mrs. Smith continued, "and you know Miss Burton, I think?"

He murmured assent, while she—Joanna—shook hands with him frankly and quietly, with the ghost of a smile, perhaps. He played his part well, too, for a moment, but halted in his sentence as it flashed across his mind that this was their first meeting since she had said "Yes." He recovered from his momentary embarrassment, however, before even Mrs. Burton Smith could note it, and promptly offered Mrs. Galantine his arm.

She was an old friend of his—as friends go in society. He had taken her in to dinner, that is, half-a-dozen times. "Who is that girl?" she asked, when they were seated; and she raised her glasses and stared through them at her *vis-à-vis*. "I declare she would be pretty if her nose were not so short."

He seized the excuse to put up his glass too, and take a look. "It is rather short," he admitted, gazing with a whimsical sense of property at the deficient organ.

"But some people like short noses, you know, Mrs. Galantine."

"Ah! And theatres in August!" she replied incredulously. "And drawing-room games! And conundrums! But, seriously, she would be pretty if it were not for that."

"Would she?" he questioned gravely.

"Well, I think she would, do you know?"

And certainly Joanna was pretty, though her forehead was too large, and her nose too small, and her lips too full. For her eyes were bright and her complexion perfect, and her face told of wit, and good temper and freshness. She had beautiful arms, too, for a chit of nineteen. Mrs. Galantine said nothing about the arms—not out of modesty, but because her own did not form one of her strong points. Wibberley, however, was thinking of them, and whether a certain bracelet he had by him would fit them. He saw Joanna wore a bracelet—a sketchy gold thing. He wondered whether he should beg it for a pattern, or whether it might not be more pleasant to measure the wrist for himself.

But Mrs. Galantine returned to the charge. "She is a cousin, is she not?" she said, speaking so loudly that Joanna looked across and smiled. "I have never met her before. Tell me all about her."

Tell her all about her! Wibberley gasped. He saw a difficulty in telling her "all about her," the more as the general conversation at the moment was not brisk, and Joanna could hear every word. For an instant, indeed, his presence of mind failed him, and he cast an appalled glance round the table. But then he bent to his task. "Mrs. Galantine," he murmured sweetly, confidentially, "pray—pray beware of becoming a potato!"

The lady dropped her knife and fork with a clatter. "How horrid! A potato, Mr. Wibberley? What do you mean?"

"What I say," he answered simply. "You see my plate? It is a picture, Mrs. Galantine. You have there the manly beef, and the feminine peas, so young, so tender! And the potato! The potato is the confidante. It is insipid. Do you not agree with me?"

"Bravo, Mr. Wibberley! But am I to apply your parable?" she asked sharply, glancing across the table with her fork uplifted, and a pea upon it. "Am I to be the potato?"

"The choice is with you," he replied gallantly. "Shall it be the potato? or the peas?"

Mrs. Burton Smith, seeing him so absorbed in his companion, grew puzzled. Look as often as she might at Joanna, she saw no sign of jealousy or self-consciousness in the girl's face. Joanna seemed to be getting on perfectly with her partner; to be enjoying herself to the full, and to be as much interested as any one at table. Mrs. Burton Smith sighed, if the truth be known. She had the instinct of matchmaking. And she saw clearly now that there was nothing between the two; that if there had been any philandering at Temple Rothley, neither of the young people had put out a hand—or a heart—beyond recovery.

But this success of Wibberley's with Mrs. Galantine had its consequences. After the ladies had withdrawn he grew just a trifle presumptuous. By ill-luck, too, the Hon. Vereker May had reached that period of the evening when India—as seen through the glasses of his memory—was accustomed to put on its rosiest tints, and the two facing one another fell to debating on a subject of which the returned civilian had seen much and thought little, and the private secretary had read more and thought not at all. They were, therefore, about on a par as to information, and what the younger man lacked of obstinacy he made up by readiness. It was in vain the nabob blustered, asserted, contradicted—finally grew sulky, silent, stertorous. Wibberley pushed his little triumph, and soon, as we shall see, paid dearly for it.

It happened that he was the last to enter the drawing-room. The evening was chilly. The ladies had grouped themselves about the fire, protected from assault, so to speak, by a couple of gypsy tables bearing shaded lamps. The incomers, one by one, passed through these outworks—all but Wibberley. He cast a glance of comic despair at Joanna, who was by the fireplace in the heart

of the citadel; and then, resigning himself to separation, he took a low chair by one of the tables, and began indolently to turn over the books which lay on the latter. There were but half-a-dozen. He scanned them all, and then his eyes fell on a bracelet lying by them on the olive-green plush; a sketchy gold bracelet, with one big boss—Joanna's.

He looked up at the party—himself sitting a little aside, as we have said—with a stealthy glance. There were none of them facing his way. They were discussing a photograph on the over-mantel, a photograph of children by Mendelssohn. He stretched his hand out softly and covered the bracelet. He would take it for a pattern, and to-morrow Joanna should ransom it. He tried, as his fingers closed on it, to catch her eye. He would have liked to see her face change and her color rise. It would have added to the faint charm he felt in the boyish, foolish act he was committing if she had been privy to it—yet unable to prevent it.

But she would not look, and he was obliged to be content with his plunder. He slid the gold trifle deftly under the fringe of the table, and clasped it round his arm—not a very lusty one—thrusting it as high as it would go, that no movement of his shirt-cuff might disclose it. He had a keen sense of the ridiculous, and he would not for all the world that any one besides Joanna should know of the act; that doddering old fossil May, for instance, who, however, was safe enough—standing on the rug with his back turned and his slow mind forming an opinion on the photograph.

Then—or within a few minutes, at any rate—Wibberley began to find the party dull. He saw small chance of a private word with Joanna. Lady Linacre, his nearest neighbor, was prosing on to Mrs. Burton Smith, his next nearest. And he himself, after shining at dinner, had fallen into the background. Hang it, he would go! It was ten o'clock.

He rose, and was stooping across the table, murmuring his excuses to Mrs. Burton Smith, when Lady Linacre uttered an exclamation. He was leaning across her between her head and the lamp at the moment, and

he fancied he had touched her headdress. "Pray pardon me, Lady Linacre!" he cried gayly. "I am just going—I have to leave early—so the encroachment will be but for a moment."

"It is not that," the old lady replied. "But where is my bracelet?" She was feeling about the table as she spoke, shifting with her white, podgy hands the half-dozen volumes that lay on it.

No one on the instant, however, took in the situation. Mrs. Burton Smith had risen and was listening to Wibberley. The others were talking. But Lady Linacre was used to attention; and when she spoke again, her voice was shrill, and almost indecently loud. "Where is my bracelet?" she repeated. "The one with the Agra diamond that I was showing you, Mrs. Burton Smith. It was here a moment ago, and it is gone! It is gone!"

Wibberley was still speaking to his hostess. He heard the old lady's words, but did not clearly apply them. He finished his leave-taking almost at his leisure, and only as he turned recollected himself, and said, with polite solicitude: "What is it, Lady Linacre? Have you dropped something? Can I find it for you?"

He stooped as he spoke, and she drew her skirt aside, and both peered at the floor, while there was quite a chorus from those sitting nearest of, "What is it, Lady Linacre? Dear Lady Linacre, what have you lost?"

"My Agra diamond!" she replied fussily, her head quivering, her fingers groping about her dress.

"No?" some one said in surprise. "Why, it was here a moment ago. I saw it in your hand."

The old lady held out her wrists. "See!" she said feebly, "I have not got it!"

"But are you sure it is not in your lap?" suggested Burton Smith. Lady Linacre had rather an ample lap. By this time the attention of the whole party had been drawn to the loss, and one or two of the most prudent were looking slightly uncomfortable.

"No," she answered; "I am quite sure that I placed it on the table by my side. I am sure I saw it there. I

was going to put it on when the gentlemen came in, and I laid it down just for a minute, and—it is gone!"

She was quite clear about it, and looked mildly at Wibberley for confirmation. The table had stood between them. She thought he must have seen it lying there, Mrs. Burton Smith being the only person close to the table.

Burton Smith saw that look. "I say, Wibberley," he said, appealing to him, half in fun, half in earnest, "you have not hidden it for a joke, old fellow, have you?"

"I? Certainly not."

To this day Ernest Wibberley wonders when he first made the disagreeable discovery of what he had done—that he had taken the wrong bracelet! It was not early. It was not until the aggrieved owner had twice proclaimed her loss that he felt himself redden, and awoke to the consciousness that the bracelet was on his own arm. Even then, if he had had instant presence of mind, he might have extricated himself. He might have said at once, "By Jove! I think I slipped it on my wrist in pure absence of mind," or made some other excuse for his possession of it which would have passed muster, though one or two might have thought him odd. But time was everything; such excuses to avail must be made at once, and he hesitated. He hated to seem odd, even to one or two, and he thought that presently he might find some chance of restoring the bracelet without being detected. So he hesitated, peering at the carpet, and the golden opportunity passed him by. Then each moment made the avowal more difficult and less possible, until, when his host appealed to him, "If you have hidden it for a joke, old fellow, out with it!" he had no choice—or it seemed to his uneasy conscience that he had no choice—but to answer as he did.

He looked up, indeed, with admirably acted surprise, and said his "I? Certainly not!" somewhat peremptorily.

Half-a-dozen of the guests were peering stupidly about as if they expected to find the lost article in a

flower-vase or within the globe of a lamp. Presently their hostess stayed these explorations. "Wait a moment?" she cried abruptly, raising her head. "I have it!"

"Well?" eagerly from several.

"John must have moved it when he brought in the tea. That must be it. Ring the bell, James, and we will ask him."

So it was done. John came in, and the question was put to him.

"Yes, Sir," he said readily; "I saw a bracelet. On this table, by the lamp." He indicated the table near Lady Linacre.

"Did you move it?"

"Move it, Sir?" the man repeated, surprised by the question, the silence, and the strained faces turned to him. "No, Sir; certainly not. I only saw it when I was handing the tea to—to Mr. Wibberley, I think it was."

"Ah, very well," his master answered. "That is all. You may go."

It was not possible, indeed, to doubt the man's face and manner. But when he had left the room an uncomfortable silence ensued. "It is very strange," Burton Smith said at last, looking from one to another, and then, for the twentieth time, groping under the table.

"It is very strange," Wibberley murmured. He felt bound to say something. He could not free himself from an idea that the others, and particularly the Indian Civilian, were casting special looks at him. He appeared calm enough, but he could not be sure of this. He felt rather as if he were each instant changing color and betraying himself to every eye. His very voice sounded forced to his ear as he repeated fussily, "It is very odd—very odd! Where can it be?"

"It cost," Lady Linacre quavered—irrelevantly, but by no means impertinently—"it cost fourteen thousand out there. Indeed it did. And that was before it was set."

A hush as of awe fell upon the room. "Fourteen

thousand pounds!" Burton Smith said softly, his hair rising on end.

"No, no," said the old lady, who had not intended this mystification. "Not pounds; rupees."

"I understand," he replied, rubbing his head. "But that is a good sum."

"It is over a thousand pounds," the Indian Civilian put in stonily, "at the present rate of exchange."

"But, good gracious, James!" Mrs. Burton Smith said impatiently, "why are you valuing Lady Linacre's jewelry—instead of finding it for her? The question is, 'Where is it?' It must be here. It was on this table fifteen minutes ago. It cannot have been spirited away."

"If any one," her husband began seriously, "is doing this for a joke, I do hope——"

"For a joke!" the hostess cried sharply. "Impossible!"

"I say, my dear," he persisted, "if any one is doing this for a joke, I hope he will own up. It seems to me that it has been carried far enough." There was a chorus of assent, half indignant, half exculpatory. But no one owned to the joke. No one produced the bracelet.

"Well, I never!" Mrs. Burton Smith exclaimed. And as the company looked at one another, it seemed as if they also had never known anything quite so extraordinary as this.

"Really, Lady Linacre, I think that it must be somewhere about you," said the host at last. "Would you mind giving yourself a good shake?"

She rose, and was solemnly preparing to agitate her skirts when a guest interfered. It was the Hon. Vereker May. "You need not trouble yourself, Lady Linacre," he said with a curious dryness. He was still standing by the fireplace. "It is not about you."

"Then where in the world is it?" retorted Mrs. Galantine. "Do you know?"

"If you do, for goodness sake speak out," Mrs. Burton Smith added indignantly; while every one turned and stared at the Civilian.

"You had better," he said, "ask Mr. Wibberley!"

That was all. But something in his tone produced

an electrical effect on every one. Joanna, in her corner —remote, like the Indian, from the centre of the disturbance—turned red and pale, and flashed angry glances round her. For the rest, they wished themselves away. It was impossible to misunderstand the insinuation. The words, simple as they were, had in a moment put a graver complexion on the matter. Even Mrs. Burton Smith was silenced, looking to her husband. He looked furtively at Wibberley.

And Wibberley? Up to this moment he had merely thought himself in an unpleasant fix, from which he must escape as best he could, at the expense of a little embarrassment, a slight loss of self-respect. Even the latter he might regain to-morrow if he saw fit by telling the truth to Mrs. Burton Smith; and in time the whole thing would become a subject for laughter, a stock dinner-party anecdote. But now! now at the first sound of the Indian's voice he recognized his danger, and saw clearly in the hundredth part of a second that ruin, social damnation, perhaps worse, threatened him. His presence of mind seemed to fail him suddenly at sight of the pit opening at his feet. He felt himself reeling, choking, his head surcharged with blood. The room, the expectant faces all turned to him, all with that strange expression on them, swam round before him. He had to lay his hand on a chair to steady himself.

But he did steady himself, so far that those who marked his agitation did not know whether it proceeded from anger or fear. He drew himself up and looked straight at his accuser, holding the chair suspended in his hands. "What do you mean?" he said hoarsely.

"I should not have spoken," the Civilian continued, returning his gaze and speaking in cool, measured accents, "if Mr. Burton Smith had not twice appealed to us—if any joke was being played—to confess to it."

"Well?"

"Well, only this," the old gentleman replied; "that I saw you yourself take Lady Linacre's bracelet from that table a few moments before it was missed, Mr. Wibberley."

"You saw me?" cried Wibberley. This time there was the ring of honest defiance, of indignant innocence, in his tone. For if he felt certain of one thing, it was that no one had been looking at him when the unlucky deed was done.

"I did," replied the Civilian dispassionately. "My back was toward you. But my eyes were on this mirror"—he touched an oval glass in a Venetian frame which stood on the mantelpiece—"and I saw clearly, quite clearly. I am bound to say that, judging from the expression of your face, I was assured at the time that it was a trick you were playing—a jest only."

Ernest Wibberley tried to frame the words "And now?"—tried to force a smile. But he could not. The perspiration sprang out in great beads on his face. He shook all over. He felt himself—and this time it was no fancy—growing livid.

"To the best of my belief," added the Civilian quietly, "the bracelet is on your left arm now."

Wibberley tried to master, but could not, the impulse—the traitor impulse—which urged him to glance down at his wrist. The idea that the bracelet might be visible—that the damning evidence might be plain to every eye—overcame him. He looked down. Of course there was nothing to be seen: he might have known it, for he felt the hot clasp of the horrible thing burning his arm inches higher. But when he looked up again, fleeting as had been his glance, he found that something dreadful had happened to him. He faltered, and the chair dropped from his hands. He had never met looks like these before. He read in every face save one suspicion or condemnation. Thief and liar! He read the words in their eyes, the eyes of his quondam friends! Yet he would, he must, brazen it out; and though he could not utter a word, he looked from them to—Joanna.

The girl's face was pale and scared. But her eyes—they answered his right eagerly—were ablaze with indignation. They held no doubt, no suspicion. The moment his look fell on her she spoke. "Show them your arm!" she cried impulsively. "Show them you have

not got it, Ernest!" with such scorn, such generous passion in her voice, that it did not need the tell-tale name which fell too glibly from her lips to betray her secret—at least to every woman in the room.

"Show them your arm!" Ah, but that was just what he could not do! And as he comprehended this, he gnashed his teeth. He saw himself netted and entrapped, and his rage and misery were so written in his face that the best and most merciful of those about him turned from him in shame and pity. Even the girl who loved him shrank back, clutching the mantelpiece in the first spasm of doubt and fear and anguish. Her words, her suggestion, had taken from him his last chance. He saw it was so. He felt the Nemesis the more bitterly on that account; and with a wild gesture, and some wilder word, he turned abruptly and hurried from the room, blindly seized his hat, and went down to the street.

His feelings when he found himself outside were such as it is impossible to describe in smooth, passionless sentences. He had wrecked his honor and happiness in an hour. He had lost his place among men through a chance word. We talk and read of a thunderbolt from the blue; but still the thing is to us unnatural. Some law-abiding citizen whom a moment's passion has made a murderer, some strong man whom a stunning blow has left crushed and writhing on the ground, a twisted cripple—only these could fitly describe his misery and despair as he traversed the streets. It was misery he had brought on himself, and yet how far the punishment exceeded the offence! How immensely the shame and exposure exceeded the guilt! He had lied, and the lie had made him a thief!

He went up to his rooms like one in a dream, and, scarcely knowing what he did, tore the bauble from his arm and flung it on the mantel shelf. By his last act of bringing it away he had made his position a hundred times more serious, but he did not at once remember this. After he had sat awhile, however, with his head between his hands, wondering if this really were himself—if this really had happened to himself, this dread-

ful thing!—he began to see things more clearly. Still, he could not at once make up his mind what to do. Beyond some hazy idea of returning the bracelet by the first post, and going on the Continent—of course, he must resign his employment—he had settled nothing, when a step outside made him start to his feet. Someone knocked at the door of his chambers. He stood pallid and listening, struck by a sudden fear.

"The police?" he said to himself.

But a moment's thought satisfied him that it was improbable, if not impossible, that this summons should be theirs; and he went to the door listlessly and threw it open. On the mat stood Burton Smith, in a soft slouched hat, his hands thrust into the pockets of his overcoat. Wibberley just glanced at him, and saw that he was alone; and then, leaving him to shut the door, returned to his chair, and sat down in his old attitude, with his head between his hands. He looked already a broken man.

Burton Smith followed him in, and stood a moment looking down at him uncomfortably enough. It is bad to have had such a scene as has been described at your house, but it is worse, if a man be a man, to face a fellow-creature in his time of shame. At any rate, Burton Smith felt it so. "Look here, Wibberley," he said at length, as much embarrassed as if he had been the thief, "Look here, it will be better to hush this up. Give me this confounded bracelet to hand back to Lady Linacre, and the thing shall go no further."

His tone was curiously suggestive both of old friendship and present contempt and pity. But when he had to repeat his question, when Wibberley gave him no answer, his voice grew harsher. Even then the man with the hidden face did not speak, but pointed with an impatient gesture to the mantel shelf.

Burton Smith stepped briskly to the place indicated and looked. He was anxious to spare the culprit as far as possible. Yes, there was the bracelet. He seized it, anxious, if the truth be known, to escape from the place with all speed. But he laid it down the next instant as quickly as he had taken it up, and his brows

came together as he turned sternly upon his companion.

"This is not the bracelet!" he said. There was no smack of old affection in his tone now; it was wholly hostile. His patience was exhausted. "Lady Linacre's was a diamond bracelet of great value, as you know. This is a plain gold thing worth two or three pounds. For heaven's sake, man!" he added, with sudden vehemence, "for your own sake, do not play the fool now! Where is the bracelet?"

No doubt despair had partially benumbed Wibberley's mind, for still he did not speak, and Burton Smith had to put his question more than once before he got an answer. When Wibberley did at last look up, it was with a dazed face. "What is it?" he muttered, avoiding the other's eyes.

"This is not Lady Linacre's bracelet."

"It is not?"

"No; certainly not."

Still confused, still avoiding the other's grave look, Wibberley rose and took the bracelet in his hand, and glanced askance at it. And then Burton Smith saw him start violently.

"It is of the same shape," repeated the barrister, ice in his voice; he thought the exchange a foolish, transparent artifice. "But Lady Linacre's has a large brilliant where that has a plain boss. That is not Lady Linacre's bracelet."

Wibberley turned away, the circlet in his hand, and went to the window, where he stood for quite a moment looking out into the darkness. The curtains were not drawn. As he stood there, otherwise motionless, his shoulders trembled so violently that a certain dreadful suspicion seized his late host; and the latter desisted from watching him and looked about, but in vain, for a vial or glass.

At the end of the minute Wibberley turned. For the first time he confronted his visitor. His eyes were strangely bright, his face very pale; but his mouth was set strong and firm. "I never said it was!" he answered grimly.

"Was what?"

"I never said it was Lady Linacre's. It was you who said that," he continued, his head high, a singular change evident in his demeanor, an incisiveness almost harsh in his tone. "It was you—you who suspected me! I could not show you my arm because I had that bracelet on it."

"And whose bracelet is it?" Burton Smith murmured doubtfully, shaken as much by the sudden change in the man's demeanor as by his denial.

"It is your cousin's—Miss Burton's. We are engaged," replied Wibberley sternly—so entirely had the two changed places. "She intended to tell you to-morrow. I saw it on the table and secreted it when I thought that no one was looking. It was a foolish thing to do."

"And it was Joanna's bracelet that Vereker May saw you take?"

"Precisely."

Burton Smith said a word about the Civilian which we need not repeat. Then he added: "But why on earth, old fellow, did you not explain?"

"Firstly," Wibberley replied with force, "because I should have had to proclaim my engagement to all those fools, and I had not Joanna's permission to do that. And, secondly—well, I did not wish to confess to being such an idiot as I was."

"Umph!" said Burton Smith, slowly, an odd light in his eyes. "I think you were a fool, but—I suppose you will shake hands?"

"Certainly, old man." And they did so, warmly.

"Now, then," continued the barrister, his face becoming serious again, "the question is, where is Lady Linacre's bracelet?"

"That is hardly my business," Wibberley answered. "I am sure you will excuse my saying so. I have had trouble enough with it—I know that—and, if you don't mind, I am off to bed."

But though his friend left him on the instant, Wibberley did not go to bed at once. Burton Smith hurrying homeward—to find when he reached Onslow Man-

sions that Lady Linacre's bracelet had been discovered in a flounce of her dress—would have been surprised, very much surprised indeed, could he have looked into the chambers a minute later—a minute after his own departure. He would have seen his friend cast down on his knees before a great chair, his face hidden, his form shaken by wild, hysterical sobbing. For Wibberley was moved for once to the inmost depths of his nature. It is not given to all men to awake and find their doom a dream. Only in dreams, indeed, does the cripple get his strength again, and the murderer his old place among his fellow-men. Wibberley was fortunate.

And the lesson? Did he take it to heart? Well, lessons and morals are out of fashion. Or stay—ask Joanna. She should know.

The dangers of relying upon circumstantial evidence are freshly illustrated in this powerful story, written for ROMANCE by Jean La Rue Burnett.

THE BREADTH OF A HAIR.

"HEAR ye! Hear ye! Hear ye! All persons having further business with this Circuit Court and Court of Oyer and Terminer will now draw near and give their attention so to be heard!"

The Crier stepped down, and the Judge's gavel fell thrice with short, sharp raps. The great trial was about to begin. From every corner of the spacious court-room, anxious-eyed spectators peered expectantly toward the group of actors, each of whom was soon to play his part in the life-drama which began as a comedy and would probably end as a tragedy. Up in his lofty high-backed chair sat His Honor, with gold-rimmed eye-glasses and generally distinguished appearance; he leaned over and made a remark to the sheriff, who nodded and replied. To the right stood the District Attorney in conversation with his associate. He was a tall, dark-haired man with sharp eyes and resolute face. Back of this couple was the object toward which the curious gaze of the throng was ever directed—the prisoner. Those were no ordinary features which met the curious gaze of the on-lookers so firmly, and that was no ordinary figure who sat calmly surveying the scene with no indication of emotion or even passing interest,—a young man scarcely in his twenties, with the stature of an Apollo, expressive, cold gray eyes and pale cheeks. He was in whispered conversation with his attorney, a stout little man with gray hair, after the Wilkins Micawber style. A ripple of excitement passed from mouth to mouth as the spectators crowded each other for a better view.

"What! that boy?" said one. "Why, he's hardly out of his swaddling-clothes!"

"Yes," responded his neighbor, "but he may be old in crime. I don't like his face. It's too cold—hard." The speaker scrutinized the countenance before him, with the eye of a connoisseur who boasts ability to detect the faintest shadow of temptation floating ethereally across the nether side of the experienced felon's heart. "Too hard," he repeated, soliloquizing, "too hard!"

There was a lull in the Babel of voices; the jury had filed in and taken their seats. For a moment, the cloudless face of the defendant turned toward the men into whose custody the law had intrusted the balance of his being:—life, death. He studied each face earnestly. Then came a brief pause, succeeded by the reading of the indictment, which proceeding was interrupted by the confusion caused by the ejection of a drunken loafer from the crowd surrounding the doors. The reading continued, and was followed by an interval of profound silence, during which the prosecuting attorney arose and began his opening address to the jury. His statement was brief and concise; he was not a man of metaphors.

"You will observe, gentlemen," he said, in the course of his remarks, "as we proceed with this trial, that the defendant is guilty of one of the most heinous and cold-blooded crimes ever recorded in the annals of the jurisprudence of this county—a crime committed in a moment of perfect sanity, actuated by no hope of personal reward, inspired by no satisfaction of private ambition, but resulting, rather, as the climax of a controversy so ordinary in its nature as to hardly cause in the heart of a reasonable man even a tinge of acrimony, much less revenge. Fortunately, gentlemen, there is in this case no conflict of evidence, such as usually obscures and renders more difficult a trial of this kind. Forgetful of the consequences of his act, unconscious of the net-work of evidence which he was weaving about himself, but bent only upon the gratification of his animosity and the fulfilment of his awful purpose, this man proceeded to his bloody work calmly and with that spirit of coldness and unconcern which indicates the presence of a depraved and criminal nature, taking no precaution to conceal his action or cover his footsteps. So, gentle-

men, in reaching your decision you will be hampered by no doubts, troubled by no uncertainties.

"We will show you that on the 20th day of June, 18—, one Lawrence Canell, the prisoner at the bar, registered as a guest at the 'Holden House,' a small hostelry located in the village of Plymouth in this county, having arrived on the evening train. He was assigned a room, and the small hand-bag which he carried was taken to his apartment, according to his directions. He then seated himself in the office of the hotel and called for stationery, which was furnished him. After having written several letters, he arose from his chair and was about to leave the room, when a gentleman entered and, remarking that he had just come from the station, inquired of the clerk if he could secure lodging. The clerk replied that the last room had just been secured, whereupon the defendant said, 'I will share my room with you, if you don't object.' The gentleman expressed his thanks, introduced himself as 'James De Land,' and having lighted a cigar and offered the defendant one, the two men sat down in the rear of the office directly within sight and hearing of the clerk, who at that time was the only other occupant of the room.

"The clerk—Mr. Banks—will tell you that, after having conversed upon various subjects, the defendant alluded to the political situation and expressed extreme sentiments in support of his opinions, which led to mild criticism on the part of his new acquaintance. One suggestion followed another until a heated discussion took place. At eleven o'clock the two went to their room, still engaged in energetic conversation. Thomas Kingsley, the porter, will relate to you that, in obedience to orders from the defendant, he went with a pitcher of ice-water to the room occupied by the two gentlemen, and that as he approached, he heard sounds of animated argument, together with exclamations of displeasure, which continued after he entered the room and so long as he was within hearing; showing that the two men were in the midst of a controversy. These, gentlemen, are matters of fact and will be proven.

"We will further show you by other witnesses that

in the morning De Land did not appear, nor could he be found. Upon being questioned, the defendant persisted in declaring that he knew nothing of De Land's departure;—doggedly denying all knowledge of his whereabouts.

"The occurrence was of such an unusual nature that it was reported to the local authorities, who proceeded to an investigation. This investigation, gentlemen of the jury, resulted in the discovery of some interesting facts. De Land's hand-bag was found, partially open and covered with blood, near the bed where he had placed it on the previous night. The carpet near the bed was spattered with blood, and clots were upon the pillows and covers. Furthermore, drops of blood were discovered leading from the door of the room through the corridor, down a flight of stairs in the rear of the building and to a stream which flows past the out-houses. At this point was a large pool of blood. Some six yards further down the stream, a hat, which was identified as that worn by De Land, was found caught in some overhanging shrubs.

"These, gentlemen, are the principal facts in this case. Are they not enough? Is there need of more conclusive proof? Can there exist a shadow of a doubt in any rational mind, gentlemen of the jury, when we shall have proven these facts, as to the guilt of the defendant? You will be afforded an opportunity during the course of these proceedings to observe the nervous, impulsive temperament of the defendant. His is a nature susceptible to the most imaginative impressions, capable of being inflamed by the mildest expressions of opposition or criticism. With such an intense, active disposition, under circumstances so likely to inspire vehemence and hasty action, is it not possible, nay, probable, that a controversial remark, a satirical taunt —a smile, might have aroused the emotion of this man to its height, till, enraged beyond control, in the climax of his mental agitation he gave way to wrath, and exhausted the force of his passion upon its object? It is true in this case. Excited by the criticism which his fanatical opinions had elicited from the lips of De Land,

the defendant fell upon him and succeeded, either by the aid of a weapon or by brute force, in overcoming his victim; and having rendered him insensible, he calmly carried his inanimate body and deposited it in the water, where the swift current bore it away. In the name of right and humanity, the people of this state call upon you to punish this atrocious and terrible crime, that the blood of an innocent man may be avenged. Their voice is the voice of a multitude, which arises like a mighty tumult and clamors that justice shall be dispensed, that the punishment shall fit the crime, and that Lawrence Canell be made to suffer the full extent of the law for the murder of James De Land on the 20th day of June, 18—."

The District Attorney resumed his seat amid the deepest silence. He busied himself with his papers. The defendant had again turned, and was speaking with his counsel. He smiled calmly as he observed the movements of the District Attorney. The latter presently said, "The first witness for the prosecution will be Sideon Banks." The Crier's voice rang out—"Is Sideon Banks in Court?"

A middle-aged gentleman, whose prominent features were a set of red "Burnsides," came from the rear of the room and mounted the witness-stand. In answer to the attorney's questions he said he was clerk at the Holden House. He recollected distinctly the occurrences upon the night of the 20th of June. He identified the defendant, and recited the history of the case more in detail, but substantially as the District Attorney had done. The cross-examination was a prolonged, a clever but unsuccessful attempt to confuse the witness, and he was finally dismissed.

The next witness sworn was Thomas Kingsley, the porter. He corroborated the statements of the District Attorney as to his knowledge of the affair. His manner was so aggressive that the defendant's counsel had occasion several times during the cross-examination to rebuke him. "A prosecution," said the counsel, "is not necessarily a persecution." But the evidence remained unaltered.

As the witness left the stand, the excitement of the spectators demonstrated itself by frequent ejaculations and whispered conversation here and there.

Jousten Perus, the sheriff of the county, was next called. He testified that he had conducted the examination at the Holden House. He was the one also who found the hat of the missing man. An argument between the attorneys took place at this point regarding the admission of this evidence.

James King, M.D., a corpulent gentleman, whose voice reminded one of Schubert's Serenade in B-flat major, took the stand. He swore that he was the coroner. He had investigated every feature of the case, and was prepared with a whole arsenal of medical phrases and terms of the profession. The cross-examination revealed the fact that, while this "expert" could detect without difficulty the difference between the blood-corpuscles of a human being and those of other animals, he could not estimate the specific gravity of the pancreatic juice. He swore that the blood discovered at the Holden House was human blood.

The District Attorney conferred with his associate, and then announced that the people would rest. The Court took a recess.

The first witness called by the defence was the prisoner himself. After the usual preliminary questions, the counsel asked:

"Do you recollect the night of the 20th of June last?"

"I do, sir, distinctly."

"Where were you that night?"

"I left Bolton City at five o'clock and arrived at the Holden House in Plymouth at eight o'clock."

"State what occurred at the Holden House after you arrived."

The witness related what took place up to the time of his going to bed with De Land, verifying the statements of the other witnesses.

"Had you ever known De Land previous to this meeting?"

"I had not."

"Did the conversation upon political subjects, which

you say you had, continue after you reached your room?"

"It did."

"And when did it stop?"

"As soon as we were in bed."

"About what time was that?"

"Nearly half-past eleven."

"State to the jury what else, if anything, occurred after that."

"That is all I recollect, sir. In the morning when I awoke, De Land was not in the room; I supposed he had arisen and gone down-stairs. I dressed and, after eating my breakfast, prepared to depart."

"Well?"

"The sheriff met me at the door and took me into custody."

"Is this all you know of the affair?"

"Positively all."

The District Attorney smiled complacently, while a murmur of contempt passed from mouth to mouth. In the face of these demonstrations the witness sat unmoved, with erect head.

The District Attorney rose slowly to cross-examine.

"So you were discussing political affairs, eh?"

The witness assented.

"It was a rather heated argument, wasn't it?"

"We were both very much interested."

"And was it not a fact that you were both a little,—well, angry?"

"We might——"

"Answer my question!"

"Yes, sir—but——"

"And didn't De Land criticise your sentiments somewhat severely?"

"He said that he was surprised that I should entertain such views, and that when I was older and had had more experience, I would see what a fool I had made of myself."

"Is that all he said?"

"Yes, sir—all."

"Well, now, Canell, when you arose in the morning,

did you notice any blood-spots on the carpet or anywhere in the room?"

"No, sir—I——"

"What!"

"No, sir, I did not."

"Did you see any blood in the room at any time thereafter?"

"When the officers took me to the room they pointed out the spots."

"And isn't it a fact, sir, that in order to leave the room in the morning, you were obliged to pass directly over the place where the blood was?"

"Yes, sir."

"And do you mean to swear that in walking to the door you did not see the blood?"

"I do, sir."

The counsel glanced knowingly at the jury.

"Well now, Canell, from the time you arose till the time when you prepared to depart from the hotel you say you did not see De Land?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you make any inquiries concerning his whereabouts during that time?"

"I—no, sir."

"That is all."

"I have one more question," said the defendant's lawyer, rising, "Is your eye-sight good?"

"No, sir, I have suffered from astigmatism for years."

Several witnesses were called to testify to the previous good reputation of the accused. The defence closed.

The address of the defendant's counsel was a magnificent effort. He employed the few resources available with the science of a master-hand, and aroused the admiration of his auditors,—but it was the compassion which the energy of one who struggles for a lost cause arouses in the hearts of sympathizers, rather than the approbation which observers express to one who prosecutes a meritorious mission. And so, while the defendant's counsel pleased the ears of the listeners, the District Attorney appealed to their judgment. The eloquence

of the one was entertaining; the argument of the other was effective.

The charge of the Court was neutral and brief. The jury filed out amid oppressive silence.

During the proceedings the prisoner had maintained the stoical indifference which characterized his demeanor at the first. He displayed now no evidence of anxiety, and when, after twenty minutes had elapsed, the twelve men came slowly back and took their places, he showed no signs of even passing interest.

The clerk of the Court arose.

"Gentlemen of the Jury, have you agreed upon your verdict?"

"We have," replied the foreman.

"What say you, gentlemen, is the prisoner at the Bar guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty."

A murmur of applause came from the spectators. The prisoner smiled.

. . . . . .

Two men sat in the "smoker" of a train conversing over their cigars.

"Speaking of adventures of that kind," remarked one, "reminds me of an experience I once had. I was one day called on professional business to Kingston, and in order to reach that city from my home in the western part of the state, I was obliged to change cars at a small town up the line called Plymouth. Owing to delays I was compelled to remain over night at the latter place. Having arrived late, I went immediately to the hotel, where I occupied a room jointly with a young fellow who smoked my cigars and talked anarchy. After going to bed I suddenly remembered that, having made my toilet hastily before leaving home, I had forgotten my pocket-book. I had used all the change in my pocket in purchasing a ticket. This worried me. Finally however, I fell asleep. Early the following morning I had a severe attack of nose-bleed. I arose and after dressing left my room and went to the rear of the building, where was a stream of water; here I succeeded in

stopping the hemorrhage, although I lost my hat in doing so. It occurred to me that I would save myself considerable embarrassment by not returning to the hotel, as I had no money with which to settle my bill; so, going directly to the station, I awaited my train and proceeded to my destination. Subsequently I enclosed the amount of my bill at the hotel, and forwarded it to the proprietor without explanation. I've often wondered how he regarded the manœuvre."

The speaker paused, attracted by the peculiar expression on his companion's face.

"What the devil's the matter with you, man? You're paler than a ghost!"

The other's lips trembled a little: "Oh, nothing; you see I am the District Attorney for —— County. A year ago I prosecuted and convicted a man for murdering you; I'm on my way to his execution now, he swings in—let me see—," and he looked at his watch,—"two hours and twenty minutes,—I—I—am glad I met you, sir."

A mixture of letters on St. Valentine's Day might be expected to produce strange results. Such a case is described in this anonymous story from *All the Year Round.*

DORIS HOLT'S VALENTINE.

CHAPTER I.

Doris Holt was the orphan daughter of an officer, who had been the comrade and bosom friend of Lady Glumglass's only brother. In days long past, Lady Glumglass, who was then Nora O'Brien, had spent the happiest hours when the two friends came over to her Irish home, to devote some of their leave to shooting and fishing, and all the miscellaneous enjoyments which the large country house and extensive estate afforded. But that was long ago. Captain Holt had married and left the army; Nora became the wife of Lord Glumglass, an excellent but elderly man; and the old times and old associations were waxing dim.

But they were destined to be recalled by trouble. Bobby O'Brien returned from arduous foreign service, wounded and broken in health; and, with a pathetic yearning for the happy past, went down to his favorite sister's to die.

During his lingering illness—a peaceful and, in spite of its ineffable sadness, almost a happy time—he longed to see his old friend again; and Holt came to spend a week with him at Lady Glumglass's.

It was not only the dying brother and the married sister who were greatly altered since their last meeting together in Ireland. Arthur Holt was also a changed man. All his old buoyancy of spirit was gone; the ready wit, the pleasant complacency had vanished; his figure was already bent, and his face was careworn and anxious, with an ever-present expression of regret. He spoke but little of his wife, much of his little daughter. When his visit had ended, Nora and her brother had a

long talk about him, in which she learned something of the cause of this change.

Captain Holt had fallen in love with and married a very pretty girl, the beauty of a fashionable town where he had been quartered. For some time they lived apparently happily enough, but illness robbed Mrs. Holt of much of her beauty, and she imagined that it robbed her of more. The devotion of a chivalrous husband, and the delight of a little daughter, could not make up in her mind for the loss of what she valued more than either: she became fretful and peevish, and at last her discontent developed into that curse of married life—a constant, hankering jealousy. For some years the life of the high-souled gentleman who had had the misfortune to marry her had been a constant struggle and a constant pain.

"Nora, dear," said Bob, after relating the history of his friend's married life, "it cuts me to the heart to see dear old Holt looking so wretched. Will you, for my sake, do what you can for his happiness? Will you befriend his little girl? We ought not to have lost sight of them for so long."

His sister promised with tears that she would. She would gladly do it for poor Arthur's own sake, their dear old friend; but now, after her brother's request, it should be a sacred duty.

Lady Glumglass was not of a nature to let much time elapse before fulfilling such an obligation; and when the first mourning was over, she set about discharging it. The first thing was to make friends with the child, and accordingly she wrote to Captain Holt, asking for little Doris to be allowed to come and stay with her for a while, to make acquaintance with her own little girls. And having done this, she felt more happiness in her heart than had been there since the sad hour when poor Bob had come back to her, that he might end his days under her care.

The friendship thus begun was a source of deep delight to three of the persons concerned—to Lady Glumglass, to Captain Holt, and to little Doris. Mrs. Holt gave expression to no feeling on the subject.

Time passed on. Lady Glumglass was a widow; and when Doris was a little over fifteen, her father died. Lady Glumglass now saw an opportunity of fulfilling her brother's request, serving her dead friend, and gratifying her own affection for his daughter; and in the settlement of affairs after Holt's death she offered to adopt the child, an offer the more justified as the mother was by no means well off, and had never exhibited any great affection for her. The offer was not very graciously declined, but the visits were allowed to extend to such a period that a great part of Doris's later education was acquired with the children of her friend. Mrs. Holt had resolved that for some time at least her daughter should be a governess; and with a crotchety desire for an independence, which would entail no inconvenience on herself, she would not oblige her benefactress by accepting a further favor than her interest in securing a good engagement. So Lady Glumglass, accepting the inevitable, was intent on finding a very good situation, indeed, for her almost daughter. Meanwhile Doris, now eighteen or nineteen years old, was making a prolonged stay with the old friend who was leisurely employed in providing for her interests.

Toward five o'clock on an early October afternoon, Lady Glumglass sat in the drawing-room at Beech Court, whose windows, opening on the lawn, commanded a fine sweep of park, bounded by deep woods, the horizon being formed by a range of gentle hills, soft and blue in the distance. She sat in a low easy-chair, a book in her lap, the tea equipage on a low table near at hand. Though now somewhat advanced in life, she still showed traces of the beauty for which Nora O'Brien had been remarkable. But more fortunate than many beauties who only show traces of a past comeliness, she had kept pace, so to say, with her age, and had never depended on some anachronisms of beauty which survived a general deterioration. Those who could not have gathered an idea of her youthful fascinations would have been struck with the dignified and refined charm of her later years. A sorrow which had failed to embitter had left its traces only in a sweet expression of benignant resig-

nation; and as she sat reading in the old-fashioned room, she looked thoroughly in keeping with the soft, sad beauty of the autumn afternoon.

A sudden pattering of feet and a scraping of gravel caused her to look up and to catch the bright, brown eye of Fop, a plump spaniel of great intelligence and beauty, who, having produced his effect, sneezed, darted at the ground as though about to imitate the feat of Curtius, and careered off through the wire fence into the park. Her eyes, following the dog, rested soon on a little group advancing leisurely toward the house—three girls and a young man, the girls with baskets and hooked sticks, the man with a gun over his shoulder. Her eyes brightened as they rested on the young people, and they were fair enough to justify pleasure from an artistic point alone.

Her two daughters, Alice and Minna, were slim, graceful girls of fifteen and sixteen; Doris Holt, the daughter of her heart, was now a sweet, tall nymph of nineteen; and the young man, her nephew, Jack Wentworth, was distinguished by all the beauty of the O'Briens, with whom he was related by the mother's side, and was, moreover, as clever, manly, modest, and domesticated as any sisters' idol in the three Kingdoms.

"Welcome, dears! I was thinking of making tea without you," said Lady Glumglass, as they stooped to come in under the open window.

"It was my fault, aunt. Stay there, Fop! May I bring my gun in? It isn't loaded."

"Yes, dear. Have you had a good day?"

"Two brace; and then the children managed to cross my path, and wanted to stay and see the fun, so I turned my gun into a blackberry-stick and went with them."

"And that's the result," said Doris, showing a large basket with about a handful of red blackberries in it.

"Yes; that was unfortunate. I put the gun down on the edge of the basket, and the blackberries escaped into a ditch; but Minna and Alice have done well—or have you eaten them on the way?"

Alice and Minna had baskets well stored with ripe berries, and though some traces of a red more than na-

ture's about their lips showed that they had not scrupled to take toll by the way, still their full baskets were tokens of conscientious work.

"Now we shall be able to have blackberry pie, blackberry jam, and all manner of blackberry messes."

"You won't, Jacko, unless we send you a hamper in your old age."

"Do, by all means. I wouldn't lose the fruit of our last walk together for a good deal."

"Things don't seem to alter a bit here. This walk might have been any time the last ten years."

"Only we shouldn't have got blackberries eight and a half years ago, say."

"Why not?"

"Not in April, Minna, not in April."

"That's mathematics, you know," said Alice to the company generally.

Any pedantry on Jack's part in their conversation was always ascribed to mathematics, a science in which he had once essayed to instruct them.

Jack relapsed into silence, stirred his tea, and gazed over the landscape.

"Doris, dear," said her ladyship. "I find that the Rooteens expect more work from their governess than I thought, so I have written to say that it will not do for you."

"Thank you, dear," said Doris; "but I think you are too particular about me. As I must go, I had better take what I can, like others, and get it over."

"Tut-tut!" said Lady Glumglass. "If Mrs. Holt is determined, so am I. She has put the matter in my hands, and if I wait a year till I find a satisfactory home, she cannot complain."

This was a subject which always excited the little circle very much, and Jack's violence when it cropped up was for him phenomenal.

"Look at Jack," said Alice; "poetry now." And she tapped her head and nodded at her silent cousin.

The reflected light of the red sunset was on Jack's dark handsome face, and he was gazing into vague distance as though revolving some solemn thoughts.

"What is it, Jack? Repeat it now with action."

"I was thinking," said he, "how long it would take to get in a perfectly straight line from here to the foot of Micklesham Church tower, how many rivers and streams there are to cross, and how wet one would be when one got there. Now, Miss Reader of Faces, that's not very poetical, is it? But I was also thinking just now that, if Dolly's going away threatens to make any difference to us, and to break up our jolly old times, there must be a new departure at once. Mrs. Holt may take her home, and we will go and fetch her here by force and have no more anxiety about it. It's flying in the face of Providence to break up a family like this for a mere whim."

"Oh, my dearest boy," exclaimed her ladyship, sorrowfully. "You know it is a great grief to us all, but I can't help it. I have done all I could, and I have secured our dear Doris for some time at least, when if I had been more grasping, we might have lost her altogether."

"Yes, mother, dear, I know; but it's too bad. If Doris goes away, we can't tell if it will ever be the same again."

"Oh, Jack, dear," said Doris, "it will be just the same. I shall always be here in my holidays (long ones, too), and it was always in holidays that we had our best times here before, and even now we are never sure of being all together except about the old holiday time."

"That's very wise, Dolly," said Minna; "but it won't be so jolly for us, for it's been all holiday lately, so far as having you goes."

"Well, my dear children, don't let us meet our trouble half-way. It generally ends in tears and temper somewhere when we talk about this in public."

"Heigho!" said Jack, rising. "This is a jolly place. Come and help me to put Fop to bed."

And they went out as of old, round by picturesque ways to the stable regions, and were happy and merry again.

The next day was the last of Jack's present visit, and,

in accordance with immemorial usage, they intended to spend it in a long lazy day in the neighboring woods. But at breakfast their plan was upset. Lady Glumglass had notice of the visit of a brother-in-law, who proposed coming in time for lunch and leaving by an evening train from the neighboring station.

"Oh, he might have come any other day," said Alice. "Of course he must come and spoil Jack's last day."

Now Mr. Wescot, for that was his name, was not generally looked upon as an unwelcome guest anywhere; and, though a cherished plan was spoiled by his arrival, he soon talked away the disappointment, even from the mind of Alice; and when they strolled out after lunch in the park, they scarcely felt the addition of a comparative stranger to their party. Mr. Wescot devoted himself most to Doris, and in the course of their ramble he contrived to have a good deal of conversation with her, seemingly much to his gratification. Before leaving he had a talk alone with Lady Glumglass, and Jack, having driven him to the station, was in turn admitted to a private audience of her ladyship.

He learned that, as he had half suspected, Mr. Wescot had come down for the purpose of seeing Doris, and, having seen her, was exceedingly anxious to secure her as companion for his two daughters. These motherless girls were now in Germany, with an aunt and governess, who would probably remain there when they returned in the Spring. So, subject to contingencies, it had been arranged that Doris should remain in peace until it was definitely settled about the return of the Wescots. Even Jack saw how good an arrangement this was. It insured Doris an uninterrupted stay of about six months more with them; and the engagement with the Wescots was such that even he could find no flaw in it beyond its original sin of complying with Mrs. Holt's absurd desire. Still the settlement of the problem made Jack feel sorry, and the realization of a change in their little circle made him rather gloomy on his last evening.

"Jack, where have you been? You said you were coming to have a farewell chat by the fire?" asked Minna, when he joined them in the school-room so-called.

Jack looked rather grave, and a trifle mysterious, and his dark eyes rested on Doris with an inquiring glance, which broke into an affectionate smile when she looked up and met his gaze.

"Well, my dear Minna, I've been talking with auntie on a matter of some importance."

"Oh, how grand! Jack's business must be something wonderful. What was it, Jack, dear?" And Minna changed from a tone of banter to one of coaxing, not liking the idea of Jack leaving them to talk about mysterious business, which they must not know.

"Oh, a wonderful secret; you couldn't understand it."

"What nonsense, Jack!" said Alice. "As if you could understand anything that we couldn't. He's only been getting mother to find the places in Bradshaw for him. He's so stupid!"

"Now, I said it was something you children couldn't understand. You don't believe me, Alice. Very well; it was about German grammar."

Now, Alice was proverbially unable to master German grammar.

"Jack, you wretch, I'll tumble your hair." And she did.

"Dolly, help!" he cried, but cried in vain, for she joined his foes, and a romp ensued which would not have disgraced their nursery days, twelve years ago.

"Dolly, it's shocking! These infants don't know better; but you—grown up a tremendous height—frocks comparatively long—you ought to defend a fellow-creature."

"You ought to have come sooner. It's your last night, and Mr. Wescot spoiled the afternoon."

"Yes, confound him, so he did. But I like that about spoiling the afternoon. Dolly looked as pleased as she could be, and I must say he made himself very agreeable to her."

"Oh, we all noticed that except Dolly. He's a dear old thing, now, Dolly, isn't he?"

"Well, Dolly," said Jack, "I don't agree with you. I owe him a grudge—deep, and never to be paid. He broke up the family this last afternoon, and took our

dear Dolly away. Therefore, he is my enemy." Having said this tragically, but with a shade of real earnestness, too, he dropped the subject, and the rest of the evening was spent in chat and music, as usual. But Jack was unusually affectionate in voice and manner to Doris, so that at parting she said: "My dear Jack, I haven't been sent for to go home, have I!"

"No, Dolly. Why?"

"Oh, you are so very fatherly in your ways to-night, that I made sure something disagreeable was overhanging."

"Very well; no more chivalrous devotion for me. I suppose you think all my good manners should be kept for the outside world."

"Well, it is astonishing to find him such a model, isn't it?"

To which Alice and Minna agreed cordially.

But Doris felt grateful and pleased at his attention and affection, as they all felt his loss very much when he went away; and they parted with more demonstrations of their sincere and open regard than usual. And for some days after, both Doris and the sisters still thought that there was a danger of her being summoned to go home.

CHAPTER II.

It was Valentine's Day. The Dianas of Beech Court, though not amenable to its softer influences, were, of course, the recipients of many tokens from an extensive acquaintance of susceptible neighbors. Their active share in the observances of the day took the form of derisive missives. They were all good artists, with some genius for caricature, and Doris had a gift of making little stinging verses, which were not a pleasure to obnoxious neighbors at this season.

Jack had had one concocted for him by the whole strength of the company, according to time-honored usage, and he had met the blow half-way by sending each an absurd valentine, together with a present to sweeten the pill.

"I think it's a shame," Alice said, "Jack always gets

a horrid thing from us, and he always sends us something nice with his revenge."

"He would be hurt if we didn't send it," said Doris. "He is so fond of keeping up old customs. But we might send him some present with it, as he always does."

Lady Glumglass received by the afternoon post two letters which gave her perhaps as much pleasure as any valentines could have afforded. Since Mr. Wescot's visit she had heard nothing further of his plans, and was, indeed, well content to let matters be. But this afternoon she had a letter from his sister, who was with the children and the governess in Germany, which bade fair to settle the whole matter in a satisfactory way.

"This is an important day for Doris," she said, meditating on Mr. Wescot's offer. "She will be almost as free as she is with us; and when her mother sees that her crotchet is humored, she will very likely get tired of it, and let her come to us definitely after all. I will show the dear child this last page of Miss Wescot's letter. She will see there are no hardships to endure."

The last page ran as follows:

"Fraulein Hardbach remains in Germany, as my brother may have told you, and we shall be glad to see Miss Holt on our return to London at the beginning of March. Miss Hardbach's stipend was one hundred and fifty pounds per annum, and if this meets your views, we propose to make the same arrangement with Miss Holt. She will find her duties little more than those of an older friend for the girls; and my brother was so charmed with her that he is anxious lest we should not, after all, succeed in obtaining so very desirable an addition to our circle."

Lady Glumglass smiled with pleasure; nothing more entirely suitable could have been found. Since Mrs. Holt insisted on her daughter's earning a living, here at least it would be a path comparatively of roses. The family was charming, the work nominal, the pay good; and until something should occur to bend Mrs. Holt's stubborn jealousy, and persuade her to assent to the adoption of her child, the arrangement with the Wescots would come nearest to satisfying all people concerned.

The other letter which caused her pleasure was from Jack. Jack's letters always pleased her, and next to seeing his dark, merry face in her boudoir, she welcomed the sight of his somewhat eccentric handwriting.

Jack's letter was serious and business-like. He was deeply concerned in the success of some theatricals. The leading lady had been at the last moment prevented from undertaking her part, and unless Mrs. Rugeley could be persuaded to play, their prospects were dark. But Mrs. Rugeley had on two or three previous occasions refused to appear again. She had got tired of the trouble, and had had a surfeit of success; and Jack wanted his aunt to try all she could do to persuade her to relax her rule for this occasion only. The last page of his letter, which we shall shortly see, was the conclusion of his appeal on the subject. Lady Glumglass read, smiled, and resolved to do her best; but the more important business of Doris and the Wescots claimed precedence of everything. The letters lay open on the table. The envelopes were alike, the letters were folded across in the same way. Her ladyship gazed at the cheery fire; her glasses lay upon the table. She took up the nearest letter and the nearest envelope, put the one inside the other; put the other letter into the other envelope, and put both back into her basket.

The housekeeper appeared at this point to take counsel upon some domestic matter, and when she retired, she was charged to summon Miss Doris to speak with her ladyship.

Doris soon appeared, and was quickly settled in a particular low chair of surpassing comfort, which she affected whenever summoned to a conference in this boudoir.

"Doris, dear, I have some very good news for you," began her ladyship; "quite a substantial valentine. I dare say you will be surprised at first, but I have known it for some time." And here she smiled a superior and somewhat crafty smile. "You had no idea what an impression you had made; but I thought it would come to this all along. I didn't tell you anything about it before, because it is well to guard against disappoint-

ments. Now, dear, read that last page, and tell me if that isn't a very charming valentine."

Doris, all expectation as to what might be the nature and who the maker of this desirable offer, took the letter and read with growing wonder and confusion.

"I leave my proposal in your hands, for if she will not listen to you, it will be a hopeless case, and I shall do no good by speaking in person, which, under all the circumstances, would only be awkward for us both; but if you see grounds for hope in her answer, I will take courage and put it before her myself. Write at once, or ask Doris to do so, as I am in great anxiety till I hear."

She read it through twice, scarcely able to believe her eyes. There it was, however, in Jack's well-known handwriting.

Her uppermost feeling after astonishment and perplexity was one of amusement, though the solemnity of the occasion, as enforced in her ladyship's prefatory remarks and expressed in her expectant face, was sufficient to keep it in check. That Jack had made her an offer was sufficiently extraordinary, but that one so self-reliant and so open with them all should for a long time have made his aunt his only confidante on such a subject was still more strange.

There was, of course, no room for the suspicion of a mistake, and the employment as advocate of her benefactress, friend, and mother looked under the circumstances like the policy of one who made up in earnestness what he lacked in confidence. Here was suddenly presented the opportunity she had often craved for making some return for the kindness with which she had been loaded since childhood; but it was indeed giving her all in return. As she stood blushing, surprised, and shy, with the light of suppressed laughter at a certain comical element of the affair in her eyes, she looked perfectly lovely, the image of coy triumph and laughing tenderness. "Dear me," my lady mentally exclaimed: "how lovely the child is! She looks for all the world as if she had just received her first love-letter."

"He cannot mean it," said Doris at length, glancing for a moment at Lady Glumglass's anxious face.

"Oh, yes, my dear child," she said eagerly; "yes, he does; every word of it."

"Did you," asked Doris, hesitating, "did you know about it before, Auntie?"

"Oh, yes, dear; I may say it was chiefly my doing," she said, with a little smile of satisfaction.

"That settles it, then," thought Doris.

"How long have you known about it?" she asked, curious in the midst of her perplexity.

"Well, definitely, ever since the day Mr. Wescot lunched here last October, the afternoon Jack went away. He and I had a long talk about it just before he left."

Doris felt again the strength of her obligation to yield, and the eagerness and anxiety in her ladyship's face and manner impelled her to a speedy and favorable answer. She went and knelt by the low chair to receive the caresses and support of her friend.

"And do you think I ought to accept?" she asked. "It is such a very serious thing; and do you think he would be satisfied with me? It is so serious and so sudden, and I am so young." And her eyes filled with tears, and she looked bewitching.

"Of course you must accept, darling," answered her ladyship decidedly, stroking Doris's head with a loving hand. "It is quite a settlement for you, and it will not be like losing you entirely, even for a time. You will be quite one of us, he says. I should think he will be satisfied with you. He is a very lucky man to get you. You will be quite a treasure to him, and an ornament to his home, and a dear little mother to his children," she added, kissing Doris gently on her forehead.

"Auntie, dear, you say it was your doing, and it will please you if I accept."

"Certainly, darling. Nothing more satisfactory for yourself or more pleasant for all of us could well have happened."

"Then I will accept him for your sake, and try to make him a good and helpful wife." And she bent her

head, and framed a little prayer for help and blessing, while she shed a few natural tears at what was certainly rather a tame and inglorious consummation to the vague hopes and dreams of the unknown magic of love.

Wonder, alarm, and a dawn of intelligent dismay made Lady Glumglass's features almost vocal, as she gazed at the kneeling Doris. She was, after all, in many things a woman of quick wits. She instinctively realized a crisis before her brain had time to form a thought; and silence for safety was her one impression, solitude for consideration her desire. A few seconds, which seemed long minutes, elapsed in silence, then, in quite her usual calm tones, she asked for the letter, which Doris gave back to her, rising at the same time, with pretty flushed face and rather tumbled hair.

The thought of Jack and his method of proposing was again uppermost, and again with the smile that looked so coyly sweet, she asked, "Shall I write, Auntie?" in a tone which rather plainly implied, "Must I write?"

"No, darling," answered her ladyship, rather quickly. "I will write." The sight of the pretty, bashful, smiling face, and eyes still bright with tears, almost made her groan with anguish.

"Go, darling, now, for a while. I must attend to my letters. You won't say anything about this, dear, yet? It is always well to be reticent, even with one's bosom friends."

Doris had none of the wild delight of a love-secret which prompts young people to share their bliss with every friend they have; her instinct would be, for the present, rather to avoid the subject; so, promising silence, she left Lady Glumglass alone.

Lady Glumglass could have cried aloud with pain and dismay. The letter made it all, alas, too plain.

She could not recall the course of their conversation in detail, short though it was; but she knew that a complete chain of corroborative evidence had been woven by the answers which she had made, answers which referred, of course, to Mr. Wescot's excellent proposal for a governess for his three children; while Doris's questions, though perfectly applicable to the subject, had

been prompted by a supposed offer of marriage from Jack. She took Jack's envelope from her basket, and there was Miss Wescot's letter; by a simple careless change of letters she had put herself into this most dreadful position. How to escape from it she could not think. By her own carelessness she had led Doris into betraying her love for Jack, for she now understood thoroughly the cause and meaning of that lovely smiling confusion; she had drawn out the sacred secret of a maiden's heart under false pretences, and had been commissioned to accept the man who had never dreamed of making her an offer: and it had been done with such fascinating delicacy and ingenuous modesty, Doris accepting the first dear spoils of conquest in such a way as to give to my lady some apparent share in sealing the happiness of them both. Now, if she had known the real state of the case—that Doris had never been in love with Jack at all (except, perhaps, once, when she was seven and he thirteen); that she only accepted the supposed offer because she had been so strongly urged to do so, almost as a matter of course, by her more than mother; that the tears were tears of a vague disappointment, and of resignation to a duty imposed by loving gratitude; that the smiles were smiles of amusement at the thought of her old brother-friend figuring as a suitor in so sudden and strange a fashion—even had her ladyship known all this, it would yet be a matter of extreme delicacy to have to tell her that the offer was all a mistake; that it referred to another lady, who was much wanted to act in some amateur theatricals, but whose previous refusals made it rather an unpleasant matter to renew the request. This would, at least, have been an awkward and disagreeable task; but viewing the matter as Lady Glumglass did, to whom the state of the case seemed as plain as though Doris had proclaimed, "I love him," it was almost too horrible to contemplate.

Something, however, must be done, and, with that instinct which we all have at times of facing the very worst at once, she wrote off to Jack, begging him to come over directly, as she wanted his advice and assistance in a great and pressing difficulty.

Jack, being quite unable to imagine what could have rendered his assistance so suddenly imperative, forbore to distract his mind with fruitless imaginings, but made immediate preparations for a short absence, and within two hours of receiving the letter was already starting on his way to Beech Court.

As he neared his destination, an anxiety which he could not control came over him. As the features of the passing scenery became familiar, visions of vague dangers threatening the little household shook his heart within him, but by the time he had reached Beech Court (and the local fly gave him some time for reflection) he had recovered his wonted calmness.

He went at once to his aunt's room.

"Oh, Jack, my dear, I'm so glad you've come; and the girls are out, so it's all safe."

"I came at once, mother, dear." She was indifferently mother or aunt to him. "I saw the girls waiting by the Melbury Road gates, so I concluded there's nothing the matter with them."

"Oh, no, Jack; it's I that have done it. I don't know how to tell you, or what you will say to me or think of me."

Jack smiled, and suggested that he should be taken at once into her confidence.

Lady Glumglass proceeded to explain.

"I had a letter from Miss Wescot yesterday about Doris. You know about it?"

Jack nodded.

"And I began telling her, in a rather mysterious way I suppose, that I had a surprise for her—quite a valentine. It was a very good offer indeed, and I had quite set my heart on her accepting it; and then I gave her this to read," and she handed Jack his own letter as she had given it to Doris yesterday.

Jack read it quickly.

"Good gracious, mother, she must think I was mad."

"Oh, no, Jack. How blind I have been. I never dreamed of it; but, dear child, she looked as I have never seen her look before, and the end of it was that she accepted it very prettily before I knew of the mis-

take. What can we do? I dare not tell the poor child. Jack, this is a very sacred confidence."

"Very sacred, indeed," said he, gravely.

Lady Glumglass looked at him anxiously. He stood silent awhile, meditatively biting his mustache.

"Where is the other letter—Miss Wescot's?"

"Here it is; this last page was what I meant her to read."

He took it and read it, smiling as he finished it.

"It's a very curious business, mother. How extraordinarily the circumstances lent themselves to the mistake! You don't want to keep this?"

"No; but you can't—you mustn't let her see it now."

Jack looked with a gleam of surprise in his eyes, and then with much deliberation burned the letter.

"There, mother dear, it is beyond the reach of accidental disclosure now."

"Oh, but, Jack, you can't burn words and impressions! What can you do with them?"

"Well," he answered slowly; "we must support them."

"But you can't marry her, my dear."

"But I must, mother. I'm bound in honor. I'll ask her as soon as she comes back."

"Oh, my dear boy, it's such a solemn thing to be forced into by accident. I shall never forgive myself if you're not happy." And there were tears in her eyes as she spoke.

"It is a solemn thing, and nothing was further from my thoughts. But, after all, it is about time I thought of getting married, and I'm sure no one could have a better wife than Doris."

But somehow the idea of proposing to his old chum, Doris, made him smile in much the same way as his supposed offer had made Doris smile on receiving it.

"Now, as you say, it was a very sacred confidence which she was beguiled into making. So we had better forget about the manner of it, and let it be buried forever. I have come down from town, mother dear, to look for a wife. What do you think of Doris Holt?"

And on this new footing he discussed the question in

all its bearings, and concluded that, for many reasons, many a worse day's work might have been done than that of yesterday.

As the evening was closing in, the sound of wheels was heard in the drive, and soon steps and voices in the hall.

"Hullo!" cried the clear voice of Minna, "a hat!"

"Oh, Minna!" said Alice, "here's Jacko's stick."

And a rush was made for the drawing-room, where the said Jacko was basking in the fire-light.

"I've come down to pay you out for that thing you sent me yesterday," said he, after greetings; but he looked a little anxiously toward the door for the third figure. Doris had stayed behind a moment to secure her self-possession under this sudden shock; but she was not reassured by being greeted before she was well in the doorway, by Alice calling out:

"Doris, he's come down about that thing that was sent yesterday."

Doris's heart stood still a moment; but Jack, being equally on the alert, saw the second sense of the remark, and came to her rescue by saying,

"I don't think it was Dolly's drawing: she may have written something on it though."

So she saw what was the subject, and came to welcome him in her usual manner.

"You can give Jack some tea in the schoolroom, my dears," said Lady Glumglass, after some conversation.

But when they went to the school-room, Doris was detained, and she and Jack had a short talk by the fire-light.

Presently they came together to the school-room. He felt that there was an element of strangeness about this new relation, which might spread to the rest of the party and spoil the old habits of complete confidence; so it was necessary from the very beginning to get into the old groove with all. But it was with some trepidation of mind that he entered their sanctum with Dolly as his promised wife.

"Who'd like to hear a secret, Minna?" he asked quietly.

"Oh, yes, I should, please, Jacko." For Minna had a weakness for hearing secrets, no matter how public they were, nor was she ever known under any circumstances to keep one.

"Well, Dolly isn't going away, after all. The governess scheme is exploded for good."

"Oh!" from both, which expressed more than a torrent of eloquence. Dolly's departure, though not often mentioned, had been hanging more and more heavily over them, for they all felt that it must be getting very much nearer now.

"No. I've asked Dolly to be my wife, and she has said yes."

There was a moment's silence, which rather alarmed Jack, and then Alice, her face beaming with love and delight, came and kissed him, while Minna said:

"Oh, you dear old fellow; you're always doing something nice"; as though he had planned some pleasant expedition, or produced a new marvel in bon-bons, and then she followed Alice's example, and hugged him, too.

That evening was a very happy one. A threatening cloud, which had marred their peace secretly for some months, was in a moment dispersed; and a love-affair quite in their own Eden on both sides was very charming; for they were but womankind after all.

The state of Doris's mind and the current of her thoughts enabled her, without any effort, to play her part in this little comedy of errors to perfection. A certain quietude and reserve seemed both natural and appropriate under the circumstances. She was, in truth, somewhat oppressed by the novel relation into which she had been led, though the actual responsibilities and duties of married life were still distant and vague; and so little had such subjects occupied her thoughts that she would have felt less strange if she had found herself betrothed to Mr. Wescot, and talking over her future with brother Jack. But her prevailing feeling—and very naturally—was an intense desire to break the bonds of this reserve, and subject Jack to a searching examination about the rise and progress of this notion of his, which had so suddenly influenced her destiny.

If she had been, in the ordinary sense of engaged people, in love with him, she would have no doubt taken an early opportunity of hearing all about so delightful a theme; but as duty and gratitude only had been her guides, she shrank from saying anything that might hurt the feelings of one for whom but yesterday she would frankly have owned her love; for love is an elastic word.

Jack's feelings were also of a mingled nature. He, too, had a desire to find out how long this accidentally-discovered affection had swayed Dolly's heart; but he, too, dreaded to put questions of a nature so tender, in a tone which could not honestly fail to suggest mere curiosity. At the same time a new sentiment toward Doris was already faintly stirring in his heart; for if a woman feels some secret pleasure in the devotion of a man whom she cannot love, much more does a man find exquisite gratification in the flattery of a woman's preference. The knowledge of this preference had come to him unsought, yet the sacredness of maidenly reserve was inviolate; his knowledge of the whole circumstance begot a feeling of superiority, responsibility, and chivalrous tenderness, which in a man of his character was likely in no long time to develop into real love.

It was understood that nothing should yet be definitely arranged about the wedding—a valuable concession for both, as the lapse of time would restore the former serenity to their lives, and the old affection might develop into a feeling more suitable to the altered circumstances.

Jack thought it well to leave next day, to give them all, and himself not least, an opportunity of getting accustomed to the new phase of things.

For all her efforts, Doris could not say good-by with the same unconstrained cordiality with which she was wont to speed this parting guest; her kiss was cold and lifeless, her manner devoid of its usual charm of simplicity and animation.

Jack was somewhat piqued at this, and was rather exercised during the return journey to account for it—decidedly a wholesome thing for him, as unchallenged

conquest might have inclined him, in spite of himself, rather to tolerate than to win her affection.

Thus matters remained for some time. His visits, though brief, were frequent, and when the Spring weather came on, and the time of flowers, he was as independently in love as a man could be; but he had the discretion to show nothing of it to Doris.

She had never become the same to him. She could not; the shock which had chilled her into reserve had passed; but its effects remained. She would have given anything to recover her old frank friendliness, but she could not; she felt physically incapable of it. And poor Jack, in spite of his efforts to suppress all signs of the feeling, often looked so hurt and chilled and mortified, that but for this paralyzing reserve she could have fallen on his breast and begged his forgiveness. All of which tended in the right direction; and secret tears after he had gone would have made ample amends to his wounded feelings, could he have known of them.

At last one April day they were alone in the park. Alice and Minna were visible and audible in the distance, filling their baskets with primroses. Doris and Jack were alone and silent. Jack, inspired by common sense and Spring sunshine, rushed at the difficulty, and, as the Jack of old, took Dolly to task for her long estrangement. This broke the spell, and with tears of happy remorse she begged his forgiveness, and comforted him and cherished him with the pent-up affection of many sad weeks.

This day,

> "Which, purely white, deserved
> An everlasting diamond should it mark,"

was the beginning of a magic period to them, and before long it was settled that they should be married early in July. So April and May added their gifts to the dower of Summer, and hope and happiness reigned at Beech Court.

Matters being thus arranged, and all going smoothly, the glorious June days being all too short for the happiness that had to be lived in them, clouds once more,

and for the last time, began to overcast the soul of Doris Holt. The greater and the happier that her love became, the more she now felt hypocritical and unworthy.

The remembrance of her heartless acquiescence and her tears of vague dissatisfaction weighed heavily on her conscience. To bring the shadow of a doubt into Jack's mind seemed a dreadful thing; to acknowledge that she had been indifferent a sacrilege; but to keep such a secret from him while she enjoyed all his trust and his love was a greater evil. So, after much thought and anxiety, she devised a little plan to sweeten the bitterness of her confession, and artfully to make it an incidental opportunity of confirming their mutual dependence.

"Jack, do you think we might put off the wedding till next year?"

"Doris, dear! Why, what do you mean?"

"Why do you want to marry me, Jack?"

"Why?—because I love you dearly with all my heart."

"I haven't often asked you such things, but should you be able to do as well without me?"

There was something in her tone which gave Jack a fright; he feared that his new-found happiness was in some way going to be snatched from him.

"My little Doris, what do you mean? You're not going—you don't mean that you don't care for me?"

Doris smiled an ineffable smile, and answered, ignoring his question, "Now ask me if I love you."

Jack very willingly obeyed so pretty a request, and was fully satisfied by the delightful answer, but he was considerably puzzled by her manner and her questions.

"Now then we are quite sure, both of us, that we could not be happy apart, so now I will tell you a secret, and you must forgive me, and not be a bit angry."

Jack smiled the smile of incredulity, and held her hands, gazing with amusement upon her, awaiting her confession.

"Well, the fact is that when you—when I—you know, when I accepted you"—a little squeeze from Jack—"I didn't love you at all—except like the others, of course."

The ardent lover's countenance changed, and his

heart felt smitten by a heavy sense of disappointment and vague injury.

"Oh, Jack, forgive me; don't be angry. I do love you so much that I felt bound to tell you that, so that there might be no old secrets between us."

A smile broke over her lover's clouded face. "Doris, darling, you know I perfectly worship you."

She nodded acquiescence as a matter of course.

"So you won't mind if I tell you that when I proposed to you, it was—ha! ha! ha!—it was all a mistake of mother."

"Oh, Jack! what do you mean?"

"You accepted me, then, to oblige my aunt?"

"Yes," penitently.

"And I proposed afterward as the shortest way out of the difficulty."

So the murder was out, and they both blessed the mistake that brought them so much happiness. But it never was allowed to go any further, and the laughing allusion by which either can at once reduce the other to proper submission in the playful differences of a happy married life is still a mystery to all the family except Lady Glumglass, and she is discretion itself.

This amusing tale of the Civil War, by William O. Stoddard, gives an idea of the countless experiences, far more dangerous and trying than actual battle, to which our brave soldiers were exposed ; and, alas ! all of them did not come out of their adventures so safely and merrily as did "the Sergeant" and his men.

A SWAMP MYSTERY.

THE summer of the year 1862 was particularly hot on the coast of North Carolina. It even did something to counteract the more destructive heat of the civil war.

General Burnside had captured a long reach of the seaboard, and had established his headquarters at Newberne. No battles followed very soon, nor any storms to speak of, but the army and the weather were fast getting into a high state of preparation for either kind of event.

There were Union troops at Fort Macon and Morehead City, not many miles up the coast from Newberne, and much pay was due them.

The money came down from the North in July, and a couple of Paymasters received orders to go at once and deal it out to the men.

Before the war a railway had been constructed from Newberne to Morehead City. Its rails were still there, but all its rolling stock with the exception of one hand-car had gone into the interior of the State. The viaduct was only just wide enough to carry the rails, and much of its course was through a swamp whose dense bushes were now luxuriantly reaching out as if they meant to capture the track before the end of the season.

The Quartermaster placed his one hand-car at the disposal of the Paymasters. He did so with the pleasant information that on the previous evening the busy Confederates had made a raid and had swept away all the pickets posted along the line of the railway. New pickets had been posted, he told them, and their proposed trip would be reasonably safe.

"That is," he said, "I guess you're safe from any Confeds, but if you don't get through before dark, I'd advise you to be pretty prompt about answering any hail. The boys'll all be wide awake this time. They won't be slow about taking care of themselves in the dark. Not a man of 'em wants to go to Wilmington just now, nor to Andersonville either."

That warning made the Paymaster shake his head and grow in importance before the hand-car set out, for it was plain enough that it would be dark before the trip could be half made. Precisely how dark it would be or why, was not as yet imagined by anybody.

There were nine men huddled on that hand-car when it went. A Sergeant and four soldiers were its motive power, guard and garrison. The writer of this story was there altogether as an adventurer. Two Paymasters, with the rank of Major, and one clerk, were in charge of a black box containing over $80,000 in greenbacks, to be scattered among the volunteers on the morrow.

The air grew more and more close and sultry, and just before night a sort of haze began to rise over the eastern horizon.

"That's it, Major," said the Sergeant to one of the Paymasters, "We're going to hear from Cape Hatteras."

"Storm coming?"

"Right along. 'Twon't take it long to come."

He was correct as to the time required by Cape Hatteras, or whatever was managing that storm. The sky rapidly grew black as ink, and darkness came with but moderate reference to the departing sun.

Just before entering the denser thickets of the swamp, a picket was reached and the officer in charge repeated the warning of the Quartermaster:

"Be ready to answer right away. It'll be pitch dark, and some of the boys are nervous, after last night's work. They'll shoot quick."

That was to the Sergeant, but it was a Paymaster who replied:

"Well, now, Captain, we didn't say so, but we thought the trip would be safer by night than by day. The men have got to have the money."

"Hope the Rebs won't get it then. Put her through, Sergeant, but look sharp. The storm's most got here." He also was correct about the weather. In ten minutes more such a storm had arrived as was a credit to Cape Hatteras and the whole seacoast of North Carolina. On rolled the hand-car, its crouching passengers drenched with rain, that fell in streams rather than drops. The lightning flashed almost incessantly, and the thunder seemed to be rolling around all over the swamp. Except where a streak of lightning cleft it, the darkness was like a solid wall, and there was neither headlight nor hand-lantern provided for that hand-car.

"Worst storm I ever saw," remarked the Sergeant, and one of the brace of men who were acting as motive power grunted back at him, "It's the worst kind of storm, but you can't see it."

It was a just correction of the statement made by the Sergeant, but at that moment a hoarse, deep, all but sepulchral voice from among the bushes and blackness at the right of the track commanded: "Halt!"

"Stop her! Quick, boys!" exclaimed the Sergeant, and as the men changed instantly from motive power into brakes, he sprang from the car into water above his knees and waded forward to answer the hail and give the countersign.

It was all in vain. Down came a double deluge of rain and thicker darkness. Then a vividness of blue electricity danced through the dripping bushes and a great roar of thunder followed it as if in search of the hidden "picket." Neither rain, nor lightning, nor thunder, nor the anxious questionings of the Sergeant discovered him.

There he was, or must have been, dead or alive, for he had said "Halt," but that was apparently all he had to say.

The Sergeant splashed his way back to the hand-car, using very strong language, and it was decided to go forward.

"We're just as likely to be fired into, first thing," remarked the Paymaster's clerk, "and they'd hit some of us, sure!"

Both of the Paymasters agreed with him, and one expressed his satisfaction that the box containing the greenbacks was water-proof.

"That's more than I am," said one of the soldiers. "This e'r rain's got through my roof. I can feel it trickle down inside of me."

The hand-car was not propelled rapidly after that, but the lightning and thunder worked harder than ever. Perhaps half-a-mile had been gained, when another voice, on the left this time and not so near, but equally hoarse and peremptory, shouted:

"Halt!"

Other words which seemed to follow were swallowed up by a wide-mouthed clap of thunder, and so was the Sergeant's prompt response, but in an instant he was among the bushes.

The first we heard from him was:

"Boys, it's up to my waist and getting deeper!"

"Go on, Sergeant!" shouted one of the Paymasters. "They'll be shooting at us if they don't get an answer!"

"Hurrah for General Burnside!" squawked the Paymaster's clerk, in a vague effort to let any supposed picket know which side he was on, but a severe sternness from the further end bade him:

"Shut up! Halt! Come along!"

"I'm coming!" shouted the Sergeant. "Friend! Paymaster!"

"Shut up! Come along!" responded the threatening voice beyond him.

For a full quarter-of-an-hour the Sergeant groped and floundered among those bushes. Again he used strong language; very strong, indeed; but not a soul came to meet him, nor did another word reply to his repeated requests that the picket should advise him as to what course he should take.

The party on the hand-car cowered under sheets and torrents and whole mill-ponds of falling water, and hoped that there might be a cessation of the lightning-flashes, so that any hidden riflemen would be less able to shoot straight.

"I give it up," said the voice of the Sergeant at last. He was only three paces from the car, but he was invisible.

"The boys know who we are," said one of the soldiers, "and we can go on; but it's an awful mean joke to play in such a rain as this."

"There's something more than that in it," said one of the Paymasters. "There's a trap of some kind. We'll never get to Morehead City."

"We'll go ahead, anyhow," said the Sergeant. "There's as much danger behind as there is before."

"I'm glad I hurrahed for Burnside," remarked the Paymaster's clerk.

On went the hand-car into the water-soaked darkness, and another mile or more was rolled over before the wayside summons was sonorously repeated.

"Quick, now, Sergeant!" said the Senior Paymaster.

"Don't know, Major," he replied. "That fellow's away into the swamp. He's got under cover. I couldn't even find him. Risk it! Boys, risk it! Run her ahead. They can't hit us if they do fire."

"Halt!" came warningly out of the blackness as the hand-car dashed forward, and with it came thunder that sounded like a rattle of musketry.

"They didn't work their joke this time, Major," said the Sergeant.

"There's more than that in it," said the Major. "I'm glad we're past that picket, but I'm afraid we're running into trouble. They may have surprised Morehead City and the fort."

"Reckon not, Major. Run her your level best, boys. We won't halt again for anybody."

That was brave talk, but in less than twenty minutes he exclaimed:

"Hold on, boys! That picket is right on the track. Stop her for your lives!"

They did so, as an ominous and menacing throat repeated:

"Halt! Halt!" and from the rear, at the same moment, other voices seemed to say:

"Got 'em! Got 'em now!"

"I'm afraid they have," groaned the Major, "money and all, and we're on our way to Wilmington."

"No use to hurrah for Burnside this time," squeaked the Paymaster's clerk.

The Sergeant ran ahead along the track until he missed his footing in the dark and went off into a grimy depth of water and black mud, just as somebody said:

"Who's there?" and he was trying to respond:

"Friend, with the countersign."

His mouth had too much in it for success, and once more he used strong and very volcanic expressions as soon as his vocal organs were at work again. Then we heard him say:

"Come along, boys! There isn't anybody here, and the water's six inches deep over the track."

It was a doleful mystery, and the chance of being fired into grew grisly enough, as the car was dubiously urged forward.

The fierceness of the storm diminished, and thus, with a great gust of wind from Cape Hatteras, it ceased. More wind came and swept away the clouds. The moon came out gloriously, and at that very moment the Paymaster's clerk exclaimed:

"Quick, Sergeant! They could see to shoot now!"

"Halt! Come along! Got 'em! Got 'em now! Bully! Better mount! Better mount!"

That was what it sounded like, but the Sergeant exclaimed:

"Abraham Lincoln! If this doesn't make five times that we've been halted by those Confederate *frogs!*"

In half an hour more we were all safe in Morehead City, leaving the frogs to play jokes on somebody else.

This thrilling description of a hunt for a lost child on a western prairie more than forty years ago, will interest young and old alike. It is from the pen of Dan De Quille, and first appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

TRAILING A LOST CHILD.

To-day I saw in a Pacific coast newspaper an account of a lost child. It brought freshly to my mind a search for a lost child in which I participated forty years ago. It was the only case of the kind with which I ever had anything to do. Children are often lost in large towns and cities, to the alarm and grief of their parents, but the straying of a child in a place thronged with people is not so serious a matter as is the wandering away of a little one into the boundless wilds of an unsettled country. The police are notified, advertisements inserted in the daily papers, and as some one is pretty sure to have found and taken care of the little waif, it is soon restored to the arms of its parents, except in the rare cases of kidnapping. In wild regions, however, when a child is known to be lost, it is necessary to at once organize searching parties and scour the country for miles in all directions. Nothing more quickly arouses the people of a settlement in one of our western wilds than the news that a child has been lost. The sympathy of even the most stolid in the community is awakened. In isolated settlements all are drawn together as a sort of class or large family, each member of which is familiarly acquainted with every other member, both great and small. This being the case, when a child is lost by one of the families of such a community, it is only necessary to mention its name to bring its image to the mind's eye of every one; besides, there will be scores of persons who have fondled and dandled the missing little one, looked into its innocent eyes and listened to its pretty prattle.

My experience in hunting for a lost child was had in

Iowa, in 1851. It was in what was known as the Wapse-noe-nock (White Earth Creek) settlement, half way between Muscatine and Iowa City. To the southward was a heavy body of timber, a mile or two in width and extending for thirty miles along the creek—the Wapse-noe-nock—while to the west and north lay the wild and boundless prairie.

One night, late in October, I was aroused by a cry of "Hello! Hello! The house!"

It was about ten o'clock at night. Springing out of bed I raised a window and sang out: "Hello!"

"A child is lost—William Henderson's little Lizzie. They missed her about sundown, and since then we have been searching everywhere. Come and bring all the help you can. I am going to carry the news to the other neighbors in this direction," and the man, a neighbor, whose voice I at once recognized, galloped on.

The farm of William Henderson was two miles away, on the edge of the boundless prairie lying to the northward. My brothers and every man about the house turned out and began dressing, for all had heard the alarming news and all knew the lost child—a little four-year-old. Without waiting to go out upon the prairie to catch up horses, we all struck out on foot for the Henderson farm. When we arrived at Henderson's house, we found it filled with women. Mrs. Henderson was wild. She was determined to rush forth into the prairie, despite the darkness of the night. "The wolves! the wolves!" was her constant cry. "The wolves will kill my poor child!" Twenty women were present, and all nearly as frantic as the mother. The house was a perfect bedlam.

It was not without reason that the mind of the mother was filled with fear of wolves. At that time the prairies were full of coyotes, bands of which nightly prowled about the outlying farms, ready to slip in and carry off lambs or fowls. When intent upon such thieving they are quiet enough, but if balked by the flashing of lights or an unusual commotion, they stand off at a distance and yelp out their disappointment and anger. This

evening the hungry brutes, owing to the stir about the farm, had been particularly noisy and indignant. The howls and yelps were torture to the poor mother. Some boys had two or three times gone out into the prairie back of the fields with dogs, but the wolves were in such force that they each time turned and followed the dogs in as soon as the boys turned about. Whenever the wolves began yelping, the poor mother would make a rush for the door, but four or five women, who had resolved themselves into a sort of body-guard, always piled upon her and dragged her back. As the mother was an unusually large and strong woman, these struggles were so fierce as to frighten the fifteen or twenty youngsters collected at the house and set them all to screeching at the top of their voices.

After witnessing a skirmish or two of the kind mentioned, and being unable to obtain any useful information at the house, we beat a retreat. The men were all out in a stretch of prairie that lay east of the farm. Toward them we hastened. Before us was a beautiful sight. Not only all the farmers but all the residents of the little village of West Liberty had taken the field. About sixty men on horseback, each with a huge torch, were seen moving slowly in line across the prairie. The horsemen were about fifty feet apart, and between each pair was a footman. They swept over a wide swath, and when out a mile from the fields would turn, form again and move back again over new ground. In order not to trample the child under the feet of their horses, they did not move out of a walk. At the fields a number of old men were splitting up fence-rails and making torches. Thus they were going over the prairie nearest the house, almost foot by foot.

This unusual sight stirred up the impish coyotes, and they could be frequently heard yelping in the prairie to the northward of the farm, quite heedless of the gun and pistol shots when they raised their infernal howl.

The father of the lost child was among the mounted men. He was calm, but his face looked like that of a dead man in the glare of his torch. We had failed to obtain any useful information at the house, and when

the father came to the fence where the torches were renewed, a cousin who was with me approached him. "Mr. Henderson," he said, "keep up your courage. Your child will be found; if not to-night, then surely very soon after daylight. What kind of shoes did she have on?"

"A pair of little buckskin moccasins," said the father.

"That is all I wanted to learn," said my cousin—"Take courage, Mr. Henderson."

My cousin then went to a man from the village who had a bulls-eye lantern, and borrowing it, started off alone in the direction of the house. This cousin—Milton Moore by name—had recently returned from the pineries of Wisconsin, where for three years he had been lumbering on the Chippewa river. He was a great hunter, and had been much among the Chippewa and the Winnebago Indians. In his hunting expeditions among the Indians and with their young braves he had become an expert in the art of trailing. I think few Indians could have beaten him.

When he left with his lantern, I asked no questions. I knew he was off on business; I also knew that he did not like questions. Although only twenty-four years of age, he had the gravity and stoicism of an Indian brave. A few years more among the red men would have fixed him in their ways for life. As it was, he did not get the Indian out of him for about three years; he would every once in a while take his gun and slip away to join some roving band of Indian hunters, presently returning a painted brave and adorned in all the finery of a young red man, every stitch of his civilized dress swapped off for fringed and beaded buckskin, and many dollars given to boot.

In about an hour my cousin came back. A large bonfire of fence-rails had been made, near which I was standing. Seeing my cousin come into the edge of the circle of light thrown from the fire and make me a sign, I went out to him and we withdrew into the dark.

"Well, what news?" I asked.

"Bad, bad!" said he. "The child has gone into the hog-pen."

"Great God! You don't mean to say that she has been devoured by the hogs?"

"No; I hope not. I could find no fragments of her dress. But if she escaped the hogs, I fear she is drowned. At the side of the lot in which the hogs are penned is a slough-well about ten feet deep. I found the child's tracks in the lane leading from the house out to the prairie; the tracks turned and followed the fence of the field. Then she crawled through the fence and went toward the well inside the hog-pen, in a corner of the fence. There I lost the track. Don't let the father know. Take a lantern and half-a-dozen men; then quietly slip away, rig some kind of grappling-hooks and examine the well. If you don't find the body in the well, search every part of the lot for scraps of the child's dress. I shall go southward along the line of the field, and if she came out of that pen alive, I hope somewhere to again find the little moccasin-tracks."

Soundings showed the slough-well to contain only about four feet of water. I would wait for no grappling-hooks. Taking a rail from the fence for use as a ladder, I slipped off my clothes, and descended to the bottom of the well. It was a very cold bath, but I examined every inch of the well's bottom, and found nothing but a drowned pig. This relieved our minds of all thoughts of the well. While I was dressing, the men with me took the lantern and began searching the corral, a lot of half-an-acre containing about sixty half-wild hogs of some unrecognizable prairie breed. While looking for shreds of clothing, the men were also to look for blood on the jaws of such of the hogs as were white-haired.

Stooping and groping up to my neck in water had so chilled me that I left the examination of the lot to the others, and bent my course toward the bonfires, a quarter-of-a-mile away to the southward. Just before reaching the fires I met my cousin. Said he: "All looks well again. The child came out of the hog-pen all right. I have found the prints of her moccasins in three places in the dirt thrown out of gopher-holes. She is following the main line of fence southward among

the cornfields of the different farms, crawling back and forth through the fence. I left her track in the cornfield of her Uncle John Lewis. What I want you to do is to call off the horsemen who are working southward over the prairie. I want nobody to go in that direction to obliterate the trail I am following. Make the father understand this. Tell him that, if left to myself, I will find his child. To convince him that I know what I am about, give him these threads which I found in places where his little girl had crawled through the fence," and he gave me three or four bright woollen threads from a fringed hood worn by the child.

I went toward the half-dozen bonfires blazing on the edge of the prairie, while my cousin hurried away to the southward. It was now about one o'clock in the morning and so cold that groups of men were huddled about all the fires. The horsemen soon came in when I announced the news of the tracks of the child having been found far to the southward of the hog-pen.

"The hog-pen!" cried the father. He had been kept in ignorance of the child having been trailed into the corral. When fully informed of what has been related above, the father cried out: "Thank God that she passed there in safety!" Soon, however, he said: "But are you sure her tracks have been found beyond the hog-lot?"

"Yes, sure," said I. "Here are threads from the child's hood found in places where she crawled through cracks in the fence."

The father clutched the threads and kissing them placed them in his vest pocket. "I am convinced," said he. Being informed of my cousin's wishes, Mr. Henderson then asked all to discontinue the search until further orders.

The horsemen dismounted and, tying their animals to the fence, gathered about the fires. Fence-rails were heaped upon the bonfires as freely as though they had been ordinary cordwood. The men brought corn from the adjoining field and parched it on the cob, either by burying the ears in hot embers or by toasting them on a stick. Armfuls of corn were also brought out for the horses. One seemed in a camp of Missouri jay-hawkers.

Men, on foot and on horseback, had been coming in all night, and a considerable number were still arriving, some from farms five and ten miles distant. Altogether nearly three hundred men, young and old, were in the field. There were present representatives of about twenty families, all nearly related to the lost child, with old Enoch Lewis, the Quaker grandfather, at the head.

News was sent to the mother that the child had not gone out into the prairies; that her tracks were being followed southward among the cornfields, of the farms surrounding the village of West Liberty. This was news that would relieve her mind from fear of the packs of wolves that had been yelping in the prairie to the northward. The cowardly brutes would not venture southward past the bonfires and the crowds of men about them.

About two o'clock I stole away from the camp and went in search of my cousin. I followed the main fence leading south. I came to where the fence formed the dividing line between the Gregg and Bozarth farms, but still had not found my man. Climbing the fence of the Gregg farm into a great cornfield, I again moved along the line of the central fence. I had gone about ten rods when I was brought to a halt by the voice of my cousin, the light of whose lantern I had long been straining my eyes to see.

"Well, which way?" said he. I looked about me on all sides, but in the dim starlight could see no one.

"Where are you?" I asked.

"Here," said my cousin, "sit down."

Stooping, I peered into a fence-corner and found my man lying among the grass and weeds. "What are you doing here in the dark?"

"Waiting. My lantern went out just here."

"Well, why don't you come up to the camp and get another? If the child is not soon found she may chill to death."

"O, no—she has on over her dress a good thick cloak. Her father told me that. She's all right. She's found."

"Found! Where is she?"

"Not far away. She is taking another bit of a nap just now."

"Good Lord! and you lying here to let her take a nap while her father, mother and all her people are wild about her. Where is the poor little thing?"

"Somewhere out in this cornfield. I have not yet seen her."

"If you haven't seen her, how do you know where she is?"

"I'll tell you how I know. I tracked her out of her Uncle John's cornfield to this cornfield on the Gregg farm. She first went a little way into the prairie—I don't know how far—but turned and came back to the fence, as I was sure she would, for the rise in the prairie just there would make all before her the same as blank. She would turn about in search of some object familiar to her, and seeing the fence, would come back to it. Just ahead was the cross-fence of this field, which would bar her way, so I came on and soon found where she had crawled through it, leaving behind a little woollen mitten. I trailed her along the line of fence to this spot. Here she turned into the cornfield, and I had not followed her ten feet before my lantern went out, so I just halted here on the trail and curled up in the fence corner to wait for daylight."

"But how do you know she's alive and sleeping?"

"Well, half-an-hour ago I heard her cry for a moment, just as children do at times when disturbed in their sleep. I started up, but as she ceased crying almost immediately, I lay down again with my ear to the ground. About daylight, when a little breeze starts up, it will be colder, and she will cry again. Then I may get her; if not, I'll find her as soon as it is light enough to see the trail. She is not two hundred yards from this spot, but I don't know the direction exactly."

"You take things very coolly. Let me go and get another lantern. Think of the wretchedness of the parents. Besides, the child may chill to death."

"No fear of her death from the cold. These little prairie youngsters are very hot-blooded. I have not found it cold lying here in the weeds and grass. I told

the father I'd find his child, and I'm not going to have all that rabble rushing down here, tearing through the corn like wild men. Now, go back to camp. About daylight let the child's uncle, Clark Lewis, come on his horse to the cross-fence. Then you come on here, and we will go and get the child."

"But the father, what shall I tell him?"

"Give him this little mitten; tell him that I have not lost the trail and that he shall have his child before the sun is an hour high. But tell him to keep this news to himself and remain quietly at camp. If the men up there want to ride about the prairies, let them go—I don't want a crowd down here in this cornfield."

I went back to the camp and, taking the father aside, gave him the little mitten and as much comfort as I could. A great fear that his little girl was dead immediately seized him, however. "No," said I, "she is sleeping quietly enough."

"Quietly sleeping! How do you know that?"

For answer I repeated what my cousin had told me. When I mentioned the crying of the child, the father wanted to at once rush away to my cousin. "No, let him go on in his own cool, slow and sure way. You will make him nervous and hasty."

Next I sought out Clark Lewis, and by the time I had told him what was required of him signs of dawn were visible in the east. He wished to set out immediately, and while he was getting his horse, I borrowed a lantern containing half a candle, in order to begin the trailing at once; for until after sunrise the light would be dim among the tall corn.

Clark Lewis halted at the cross fence while I went on and joined my cousin where he was literally and very comfortably "camped on the trail." He was glad to see the lantern, being tired of doing nothing. Besides he had again heard the voice of the child for a moment. "It has about had its sleep out and is beginning to fret because of the cold," said he.

I wanted to rush ahead with the lantern, and prosecute the search, regardless of the trail. "No," said my cousin, "for I am not sure of either distance or direc-

tion, except that the faint wailing cries came from the eastward. Slow and sure is the plan."

The old-fashioned tin lantern was found a poor thing for our use. It was only by opening the door of it that a sufficiently broad light for trailing could be obtained, and then it fell far short of the bull's-eye.

Between the rows of corn the ground was covered with pumpkin-vines, fox-tail grass, and weeds of various kinds. I could see nothing. My cousin, however, saw everything. When shown, I could see where a pumpkin-vine had been dragged out of place by the tired feet of the little one, but I could not see the moccasin-prints, and failed to note bent and crushed weeds. As the ground was thickly covered and hidden in most places, it was practically by what he saw among the weeds and plants that my cousin followed the trail.

It was slow work, but by flashing the light ahead to where a vine had been dragged, or a corn-blade broken off, we occasionally went forward ten feet at a bound. The trail, too, zigzagged about—did not go straight ahead between any two corn-rows.

"She cannot be far away," said my cousin. "She has here been wandering in the dark. Darkness came upon her about the time she turned away from the fence. All looked alike to her, or she would have still held to the mark which had guided her so far—the fence."

Daylight found us still puzzling over the windings of the trail. In eccentricity it reminded me of the trails of the opossums I had followed in boyhood. Not a sound had we heard from the child. This worried me, as I feared she had chilled to death.

"Nothing of the kind," said my cousin. "She has heard us and is lying low. She is in a condition to be afraid of every noise she hears."

Sunrise came and we made better progress. The trail had turned and was leading back toward the fence. My cousin, who was about ten feet in advance, suddenly turned and motioned me to move forward. When I came up to him, he pointed in silence to a spot about three steps beyond where we stood. There in the midst

of a mass of pumpkin-vines I saw the lower part of the child's red dress, but her head and the upper part of her body were hidden under some large vine leaves.

The sight gave me a great shock. "My God!" cried I, "she is dead! The poor child has perished."

At the sound of my voice up came the child's head. For a moment she stared at us with wild eyes, then on all fours she began to scuttle away, keeping her little body close to the ground, like a cat when in pursuit of game. In a moment my cousin had her in his arms. She clawed and fought him like a little wildcat, but not a word or sound escaped her lips.

She had got back to within fifty yards of the fence. As we carried her out of the field, we tried to soothe her, but she would not speak and was constantly struggling to escape. When we had carried her to her Uncle Clark, who was waiting at the cross fence, and he had told her he would take her to her papa, the wildness went out of her face at once and she cried: "My papa! my papa!" She was her father's pet, and it was afterward found that it was in search of him that she had bundled up and sallied forth, knowing that he had gone to a neighbor's near the village.

When half-way back to the camp we came to the father, who, seated upon his horse, was waiting to hear from us. The child had hidden its face against its uncle's bosom, and seeing it carried in that way, the poor man thought it was dead. "Dead, dead!" cried he. "My poor little Lizzie is dead! Oh, I feared it!"

"Dead!" cried the uncle. "No, she is as much alive as a little wild-cat!"

In a moment Lizzie was in her father's arms and almost smothered with kisses. Still, she looked rather wild-eyed, and would not speak further than to occasionally murmur fondly, "Papa—my papa."

Wild were the cheers that rent the air when we arrived at the camp—cheer upon cheer. Then a half-a-dozen young men rushed for their horses, and there was a wild race across the prairie to carry the news to the mother, and those who had all night been waiting at the house. Whooping like wild Indians, they thun-

dered along, spurring with their heels and smiting the flanks of their horses with their hats.

The shout sent up at the camp, a mile away, was heard at the house, and the half-crazed mother at once misinterpreted it, crying: "My child is dead. Hear the shrieking! They have found her lying dead!" In vain the other women said: "They are cheering—the child is safe." It was only when the crowd of wild young horsemen came flying in with their report that the mother would allow herself to believe the child safe.

The crowding about of so many men and their wild cheering so frightened the lost girl that she clung to her father's neck and hid her face in his bosom. Then he all of a sudden caught the excitement of the moment, and spurring his horse, dashed homeward about as wildly as the young men who had preceded him.

Anna K. Almy has translated for ROMANCE this charming little French story by Paul Arène. It will be found equally interesting by both young and old,—and all will alike regret that the good Curé should have waited for that fatal exclamation point!

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ'S BEES.

THE most delightful garden which I have ever known was that of the village Curé, with whom as a little boy at school I used to spend my vacations. Such fine cabbage-beds, bordered with crisp green lettuce, and all so carefully weeded, raked, and swept! They were watered morning and evening, before sunrise and after sunset, from an old sandstone fountain, green with mosses and water-cress, from which escaped, by a thousand little holes, threads of crystal, and tiny, singing rivulets. Sarrasin, the grave-digger, held the office of gardener. At first this idea was offensive to my childish mind. The grass seemed to smell of death, and the currant-bushes to taste of the cemetery! But in a short time I forgot about this, as there was rarely a death in the village. Sarrasin often remarked that his title of grave-digger was more a joke than anything else.

At the top of the garden, back of the old fountain, was a narrow strip of land, rather a lonely sort of place, where M. le Curé used to pass every moment not occupied with the duties of his sacred office. From a distance I could watch him, in company with the grave-digger, always moving about in an excited manner, and making the most remarkable gestures. They forbade my approach.

"M. le Curé does not want you," Sarrasin said. "There are only bee-hives there."

In truth these mysterious hives filled the garden with buzzing bees, darting here and there the livelong day, intoxicated apparently with pollen from the heart of the hollyhocks. But why was I forbidden to look at the hives? At what strange work were the bees en-

gaged in the company of a priest and a grave-digger? One afternoon, M. le Curé and Sarrasin were called quite a distance away to bury an old woman. Thus left alone, I could not control my curiosity another moment. With a beating heart I went straight to the forbidden ground back of the old fountain. There I found a plot of dry, sandy soil, planted with rosemary, lavender, and every variety of herb, all having a grayish tint, and giving forth a delicious odor as they crackled under foot. A thick cloud of bees, shining like gold in the sunlight, indicated the corner where the hives were located; for Sarrasin had not lied to me,—hives there were, indeed,—but what hives!

They bore not the slightest resemblance to the elegant little pointed houses, made of straw, in which the *bourgeois* bees lived; nor yet to the hollow trunk of a tree, with a bit of broken tile over the entrance to serve as a roof, the ordinary habitation of wild swarms. Picture to yourself an odd array of boxes, propped up one against another and only held in their places by a miracle of equilibrium; long boxes, arched boxes, boxes looking like fabulous monsters with arms and beaks! They were all pierced with holes, through which the bees went in and out as tranquilly as though their homes were ordinary hives; but this fact did not reassure me, and, terrified by the unnatural appearance of it all, I fled back to the peaceful vegetable garden.

That evening, my vacation over, I was taken back to school. As time went on, I almost forgot this incident. Sometimes, if I happened to think of it, I asked myself if it was not the hallucination of a childish brain.

Ten years later, a chance walk took me again to the village. I found the Curé broken in health and much older in appearance; the grave-digger was dead; the little garden was almost a wilderness of herbs; but in the distance I heard, as in former days, the hum of bees. This recalled my adventure, and I resolved to make a clean breast of it.

On questioning the old Curé, he began to laugh and insisted upon showing me his hives. There they were, in the same lonely little strip of land, behind the foun-

tain, all having the same odd shapes which had startled my childish eyes years before.

"It is an idea of mine," said the Curé. "I have worked over it for twenty years. It has cost me quite a sum of money and a great deal of time, but I still hope for success."

Can you guess what the good man was working for, and what had turned his hair prematurely white?

I will bet ten to one that you must give it up!

He was determined to make his bees write, in letters of honey, "*Vive l'Empereur!*" It was for this end they had sipped the dew of morning, darting hither and thither in the green valley, gorging themselves with pollen and gathering liquid amber. Ah! if the bees had known! But the bees did not know.

In his office of Curé, the old priest had always had a certain amount of ambition, and in the evolution of what he called his *idea*, had nourished the most chimerical hopes. The thirteen letters once completed, he intended to nail them, yellow as the sunshine, and embroidered in fine hexagonal cells, on a board, the front of which should be carved to represent the "Arc de Triomphe." This achievement should be exhibited in Paris, and the Emperor could not do less than accord him a medal and make him an honorary Canon.

But what endless trouble he had to arrive at this result! These impish bees were *so* capricious! Certain letters displeased them; no one knew why. The inhabitants of an L or an E would find their winding, twisted dwellings unnatural and inconvenient and would desert them; and there were other annoyances. The *V* of *Vive* was already spoiled and running to waste, while the *r* of *Empereur* had hardly begun to fill!

But at last the day came when all of the thirteen letters were finished in good shape; the worthy inventor, however, having one swarm over, decided to add an exclamation point! One month later, the Empire fell at Sedan and the Republic was proclaimed.

"What shall I do?" said the Curé. "Give other letters to my bees? Alas! '*Vive la Republique!*' is rather long, and then Monseigneur would not permit it."

This old-fashioned story of Albany in its cradle days first appeared in 1844 in the *Columbian Magazine*. It is from the pen of Emily E. Chubbuck, afterward the fourth Mrs. Judson, and known to the literary world of that day as the popular writer, Fanny Forrester.

THE DEMON OF THE BUSH.

A TALE OF ALBANY IN ITS CRADLE DAYS.

It was June—bright, glorious June; and the most glowing and glorious day of all the month. Every shrub and tree was dripping wet with the dew which the last night had scattered; every leaf quivered with its pendent jewel, and every arching branch was gorgeous with a thousand rainbows. A very little town was Albany at that time—little enough to be happy, and simple enough to prefer happiness to its now popular antipodes, fashionable ennui, and splendid discontent. Indeed, the honest burghers had not a doubt that the fort, tipping the small steep hill in the centre, was the finest in the world; and the street proceeding thence, and widening as it sloped toward the river, garnished as it was with two fine churches, a town-hall, market-place and guard-house, the most imposing of streets. O! golden days were those when every house had its own well, and its own garden, and its own green lawn stretching far behind; to say nothing of that household god of every true Knickerbocker, the sentinel tree, planted close by each door-stone, casting upon the little portico a shadow in which it was delightful to luxuriate.

Then the present capital of New York could boast but four streets, generously broad, and surpassingly cleanly, with a common pasture at one end, and at the other a large fertile field divided into lots for the growing of Indian corn. Above the little town to the westward stretched sandy hills, covered with the large, delicious bilberry; and beyond rose bold heights, crowned with stunted pine and dwarf oak, like a wall

of defence from the treacherous nations with which the land swarmed even to the far-off border lakes. These imposing uplands were interspersed with rich bottoms, and scenery magnificently wild, now and then softening into features of exquisite loveliness, but never degenerating into tameness.

On the morning of which we have spoken—the glorious June morning—there was an unusual bustle in the tranquil little town. Small wagons were out in every direction, and as one of them drew up before a door, its lusty occupant leaped to the pavement, strode through the court-yard with the air of a conqueror, and struck with powerful hand the ponderous knocker garnishing the door. Then a bright, merry face glanced hastily from the window, and in a moment a round, rosy damsel, all blushes, smiles and dimples, emerged from the door-way, work-basket in hand, and was led to the waiting vehicle. Distinctions in society had commenced even at this early period, and these were the noblesse, the people of figure, treating themselves to a gala day, meanwhile exhibiting a rare condescension in their choice of amusements. Families not sufficiently blessed with this world's wealth to make a residence in town feasible, had laid their hearth-stone in the neighboring woods, patiently clearing and cultivating, till by dint of industry they were enabled to take a stand beside their wealthier neighbors. These of course were in a degree thrown without the pale of society, and would have been so entirely but for a festive arrangement peculiar to the Albanians. It mattered not whether these families were strangers or not; the social spirit of the citizens overlooked such trivial considerations as an introduction, and visits to the wood, or to the bush, as it was designated, were things of common occurrence. A morning drive, followed by a pleasant chat, a dinner provided by the guests and participated in by the family visited, a merry dance, and a twilight ride homeward, constituted the order of the day. The anticipated honor on this occasion was to be paid to a family who had come from far down the river and settled in a wild, dark recess of the woods, far from any other habitation, and

unapproachable by means of wagons, for a mile around. The walk, however, so far from dampening the spirits of the gay belles of the party, was regarded as giving additional zest to the enjoyment.

Soon all were ready, and the train of wagons, passing the whole length of the broad street parallel with the river, emerged into a country luxuriant in its summer wealth of greenness. The procession was headed by wild Dirk Van Deusen, a hearty Holland boy, whose fun-loving spirit and reckless feats had gained him the then unenviable reputation of occupying the very heights of dare-devilism. Oh, such havoc as Dick made among the ducks and wild geese! And how the poor sturgeon trembled when his torch moved upon the water! But then fishing and hunting were minor accomplishments compared with the glorious fun of—nay, gentle reader, raise not thy hands in pious horror, for *pig-stealing* was glorious fun, that is, as the Albany "boys" practised it, and particularly after the scientific style of Dirk Van Deusen. And do not think said Albany boys a set of vicious young scapegraces, and our valiant Dirk a rascally varlet, ripe for Blackwell. This was a licensed amusement, without a shadow of dishonesty pertaining thereto, and the most expert sty-robber of them all would have been shocked at the thought of taking an advantage in trade over which the sleek, smooth-faced man of business of the present day would smile with the most self-satisfied complacency. A noble fellow was wild Dirk, notwithstanding his shocking dexterity in pig-stealing; for did he not help rob his own father's sty to save a neighbor whom he thought less able to spare the contribution? And then, when the smoking pig disappeared so mysteriously from the table that more than one knee knocked tremblingly against its trim neighbors, who should have the benefit of this extra freak but the poor widow Van Staats's hungry family? Wild Dirk was certainly unbecomingly wild; his fund of animal spirits was without stint or measure, and his daring made him a perfect marvel; but, notwithstanding all this, he was a popular favorite. Although pretty Katrinsche Vanderling had manœuvred

for a whole week for a seat in his wagon, who, think you, should supplant her but the hunchback, poor little Alice Van Staats! It was too bad—anybody would do to drive Alice, poor thing! At any rate she ought not to have been trusted to wild Dirk. He would drive so fast as to give her a headache, or he would frighten her to death with his carelessness, or he would tip her into some bog by the wayside and never miss her till she was inquired after. In short, Miss Katrinsche was certain that poor Alice was in imminent peril; and as she thought of the vanity which placed the silly child in such a dangerous position, the belle of Albany tossed her pretty head much after the fashion of a modern belle in like circumstances. But all this effected nothing. Dirk's whip cut a doubled and twisted caracole in the air, smack went the other whips, and the cavalcade moved on so briskly that the eyes of little Alice Van Staats fairly danced with exhilaration.

"Ho, Dirk! halloo there, my boy! Where away?" shouted a voice from the heart of the greenwood, as they were whirling onward.

"To the bush."

"Ah! Um, um! To the Couenhoven's?"

"No—away over to the ravine, a new settler."

"To the ravine? Whew! whew!" and now a lank figure emerged from the covert of the woods, and, first giving his head an ominous shake, looked mysteriously along the line of wagons that had halted at his salute.

"Aye, down to the ravine!" repeated wild Dirk, resolutely. The new-comer shook his head with an air of still greater mystery.

"And why not, Yankee Tom?" inquired Dirk, raising his forefinger knowingly until it approached the left side of his nose. "Are there dogs in the ravine, too? Ha! ha!"

Tom raised his eyes, gave his head another shake, and looked at Dirk with appalling solemnity.

By this time little Alice Van Staats was quaking with fear, and as Tom leaned over and whispered a word in the ear of her cavalier, she gave one short, shrill cry, and turned a face pale as death on the company behind.

The infection spread at once. An indefinable fear crept over the merry, chattering damsels, and all ears were opened for wild Dirk's answer.

"Never say old Split-foot to an Albany boy, Tom; go down to Salem with your nonsense; it will be understood there." There was no quaver in Dirk's voice, but the furtive glances cast upon him by his comrades, as they shrank to half their former dimensions, and the raised hands, parted lips, and staring eyes of the timid damsels of the train bespoke a sweeping absence of sympathy for his boldness.

"Der duyvel!" was the simultaneous exclamation of the masculine part of the company, in a low, half-whistling tone, as though the word had oozed incontinently from their lips, as their perspiration did from their foreheads.

"It is true—every word true, as I live"; asserted Yankee Tom. "It is a terrible place down there—dark woods and deep waters, and *I* say nothing, boys, only go on—go on, if you don't believe me."

"Yes, come on!" shouted wild Dirk, with a flourish of the whip unusually complicated; "come on, boys! we'll lay his black majesty, hoof and horns together, and bring him home as we would a good fat buck well peppered with the lead playthings. Come on!"

Dirk moved onward, poor little Alice clinging with both hands to his left arm; but not a horse stirred behind him, except to raise a foot by way of getting rid of a troublesome fly. "Halloo there, boys! do you show the white feather?"—"to a Yankee," Dirk would have added, if he had been near enough to do it confidentially. "Whip up! now forward! we shall be too late for the dinner. St. Nicholas defend us! the simpletons are turning round!"

Poor little Alice's joyous exclamation of "goot!" on the announcement of this intelligence, did not escape Dirk's ears; and with a face thoroughly steeped in vexation he gave the right rein a jerk that Miss Vanderling would have thought particularly dangerous to Alice, and in a moment had joined the rest of the company. To his utter astonishment he found each indi-

vidual of the brave sex quite as fearless as himself, notwithstanding some pallor and shaking, and an infinite deal of hesitancy and tremulousness in the tones of the voices; cowardice is a quality strictly feminine. But vainly did Dirk urge the matter of going forward. His companions were quite too chivalrous to think of such a thing for a moment, since the fairer portion of the company disapproved, and they probably thought courage quite unbecoming to the softer sex, as they took no pains to quiet their fears in the least. On the contrary, two or three stout fellows, seeing Dirk's eloquence somewhat effective, slid carelessly in a tale or two of Indian massacre, spiced with a mysterious murder for which a negro had suffered burning, though his master was ever after haunted by a shadow. But wilder legends had Yankee Tom than any of these; and he now croaked them forth in all their fearful details, till the blood even of wild Dirk would have curdled and his heart stood still, had he not detected a peculiar pucker in the muscles of the historian's mouth, and a half-subdued twinkle of the little gray eye that indicated the source of all this traditionary lore. "Faugh!" was his contemptuous reply, but there came no echo, and his bravery was of about as much avail as the last Dutch governor's when he stood on one side, and the English, backed by Nieuw Amsterdam, on the other. One of the company knew a respectable young couple inwooded far enough from the ravine to make it improbable that the unwelcome spirit should take a stroll that way; and he proposed that they should forthwith proceed thither. To this no opposition was raised except by wild Dirk; he indeed was resolved to confront the sylvan demon and drag him forth to-day. He deemed it inglorious, a disgrace, a burning shame to turn back; and whispered his companions that the Yankee would fling it in their teeth forever. But the gallantry of the Albany boys stood even this test. In consideration of the timidity of the fair damsels by their sides, groundless as this timidity was, they could bear even taunts and scorn. A low, provoking chuckle from Yankee Tom, as Dirk unwillingly tightened the reins and prepared to follow in the

wake of the little company, roused the young Hollander's metal.

"Dunder and blitzen!" he exclaimed, leaping from the wagon, and flourishing his whip around the ears of Tom; "for the ravine I started, and to the ravine I'll go, if the old serpent and all his crew should lay themselves in my path, hissing at me with the same lying tongue that turned the brain of Mother Eve. They couldn't beat a Yankee if they did."

It took scarce five minutes to adjust matters and make a transfer of the seat at Alice's right hand to Yankee Tom; though the little maiden's pouting lip gave unequivocal proof that "*anybody* would *not* do to drive Alice," except in an emergency. There was, however, a look of real, heartfelt concern on the face of Tom, that could not have been altogether affected, and this puzzled our hero sorely. He was doubtless to encounter something, and he would have liked well to know the form of the enemy.

"He thinks he has played a fine trick upon me," muttered Dirk, as he turned back to the little village to arm himself preparatory to an encounter with the embodied principle of evil; and then his lip curled, and a gleam of satisfaction flashed across his sturdy face, as his ready wit suggested a rare revenge. Comforted with some private reflections, he jogged on, and without loss of time was soon equipped and on his way to the ravine. "Ha! ha!" laughed wild Dirk at his own thoughts. "Ho! ho!" Meanwhile his eye glanced along the barrel of his rifle in an experienced way, and quite leisurely; and then he turned it round and peered in at the muzzle, as though it had been a telescope. "Ha! ha! ha! Just the thing! horns and all! ha! ha!" and with peal on peal that sent every living thing about him scampering to a place of safety, our young adventurer disappeared in the dark old forest.

The sun had been below the horizon but a half-hour, and his red beams yet lingered, as though a signal-fire had been lighted on the summit of the Helderberg hills to warn the people westward of his approach, when the gay party returned from their excursion to the bush.

The first inquiry was for Dirk Van Deusen, and John Van Brom and Hans Schonhoven passed around the hill to the red farm-house to satisfy the anxious curiosity of the waiting company. But Dirk had not been seen since morning, when, in the best of humor with himself and all the world, he shouldered his rifle and walked to the woods alone.

Morning came, and clouds or rather constellations of pretty faces were early at the windows, and earnest eyes sought the red farm-house with singular interest. In due time all the Van Deusens had made themselves visible save the one sought—the nimble-footed, light-hearted Dirk. Then little groups of girls, with their milking pails on their arms, drew themselves together by the corners of the court-yard fences, conversing in mysterious whispers; while the "boys," carefully shunning intercourse with each other, lest they should be drawn into acknowledging a weakness, walked apart in evident uneasiness. It was late in the morning—so late that every floor had been scrubbed, the milk had been set away to cool, and the wheel had commenced its monotonous buzz before Dirk Van Deusen made his appearance. And then what a figure! He had never been seen to wear that coat before; he had certainly put on his father's by mistake, so loosely did it hang about his shoulders; and as for his cravat, he had probably left it in the bush, for Dirk was very particular about making a smart appearance, and, however given to pig-stealing, had never been known to violate the "minor morals," as far as they were understood at Albany. His hair had evidently been untouched since the combing and queuing of the previous morning; and his hat, which had always been stuck jauntily on one side of his head, as becomes a hearty "good fellow," was now slouched over his eyes, as if it would either shut out some horrible spectre or veil a secret sorrow from the prying eyes of the world. Oh, a sorry figure was Dirk Van Deusen—wild Dirk no more; for he walked with the slow, measured tread, not of a priest, but a penitent. Men, women and children shook their heads as they looked upon him, and heavy sighs followed him,

and everybody put on a most pitiful expression, and whispered, "Poor Dirk!"

Weeks passed away, and Dirk's malady increased. A strange infatuation seemed to have seized upon him, for every few days he made a pilgrimage to the bush, each time returning more beside himself than before. His gun and rod were entirely forsaken; he no longer shared in the amusements common to the season, and even the athletic exercises upon which he had prided himself were abandoned. Only once had he been known to evince a touch of his former spirit. Yankee Tom, instead of pitying his forlorn state as others did, had evidently owed him a grudge from the beginning; and one day, when they happened to meet in a public place, high words ensued between them. Nobody understood the ground of the difficulty, for both parties, with evident intent even in the midst of their anger, made that obscure; but at one whispered, sneering word from Tom, wild Dirk was turned into a tiger. He sprang at his antagonist's throat in a rage; but releasing that on a cry from the spectators, he cudgelled the poor Yankee until he was fain to cry for quarter and make good his retreat.

Dirk's mysterious aberration made a deep impression on the little community where he had ever reigned lord paramount of joviality and mischief. Indeed, it occasioned a great loss to society, as great as the breaking up of the Legislature now does; and there was not an individual in Albany but felt it. The poor Van Staats, however, felt it the most deeply. The practical jokes which he had played, the stories he had told and the songs he had sung were all treasured in their memories; and the "bewitched" young man was mourned as one dead; for did not his face proclaim him dead to all joy? and certainly if (as no one doubted) he had entered into an unholy compact with the Demon of the Bush, he was thrice dead to all that gives a zest to life, even to hope. One thing only Dirk continued to sing, and that was the fragment of an old ballad which he had learned of a Yankee captain of a sloop upon the river. Little Alice Van Staats had a smattering of English, and her heart

ached for the wretched Dirk as he dwelt long and sorrowfully upon the words,

> "Oh, Lord! what is this worldly's blysse,
> That changeth as the mone!"

True, the burden of the song was,

> "For in my mynde, of all mankynde,
> I love but you alone."

And this Alice supposed to be a kind of oath of fealty, sworn and constantly repeated to the dark spirit who held the poor youth in thrall. But when her attentive ear caught the words,

> "For I must to the green-wold go,
> Alone, a banyshed man,"

she could scarce suppress a scream of terror; and then, as she revolved the subject in her mind, her little heart came near breaking, for she was no more in doubt as to wild Dirk's destiny. "He has sold himself to the Demon of the Bush," thought Alice, and when at last, in the excess of her tribulation, she ventured to address a word to Yankee Tom on the subject, he answered with provoking coolness, "Yes, he is sold."

All summer long did poor Alice fret her good little nature about wild Dirk; and all summer did the Albanians watch and criticise him, believing every strong wind raised for his especial torment, and every thunder-storm a particular provision of the enemy to spirit him away.

But the season for thunder-storms passed; though the wild November winds, as they howled through the dismal forest, or went sighing around the corners of the houses, whispering among the gay tiles and screeching from the swinging sign-boards, had no tendency to relieve superstition. As autumn deepened into winter, however, another "change came o'er the spirit" of our hero. The sadness and dejection that had marked his first intercourse with the woodland spirit had in a measure passed away, and left in its place a serious thoughtfulness, in perfect keeping with his improved stature

and more independent bearing. Some said that the power of the Demon was waning, for there was a conscious manliness in Dirk's demeanor incompatible with such fearful thraldom; others said he had been granted a longer lease of life, and that joy at this unexpected favor gave him the erect head and firm step so different from his former air of drooping melancholy. Indeed, so changed was he that, had it not been for his mysterious visits to the ravine, even in the dead of winter, it might have been thought that wild Dirk had won the victory—passed a non-intercourse law, and so come off the gainer by a fine relay of thought, for the relief of the overtasked ministers to his frolicking propensities. That winter Dirk's handsome sledge was broken into fragments by the accommodating neighbors, who volunteered to take the useless article off his hands; his skates were appropriated by his hopeful brother, Pietre, and his smart Sunday coat was never donned save on the occasion of his mystic orgies with the Demon of the Bush. His companions sadly missed their leader, for now he had no interest in their "scrapes," and listened to the relation of their most daring and ingenious feats with the supercilious indifference of a lordly magistrate bending his ear to the revelations of street brawlers. While his old comrades pursued their unmeaning revels, Dirk joined the married men in the tap-room; discussed the affairs of government with them, received many useful hints on the nature of soils and the mysteries of trade, and vied with them in the use of the "pyp" and "zoopje."

More than a year had passed since the notable June morning which had constituted an ever-memorable era in the life of Dirk Van Deusen; and now the little wagons were out again, and a larger, more gayly dressed and merrier company took the same direction that had then been taken. This time the procession was headed by Yankee Tom and pretty Miss Vanderling, but next in order came Dirk Van Deusen, with the little hunchback all in a tremor of laughter again by his side.

"To the ravine?" inquired Tom, leering over his shoulder, with an attempt at good-humored archness.

"To the ravine," answered wild Dirk, with a flourish of the whip much after the old sort, and poor little Alice Van Staats declared that she should die with laughing. On they went, hurry scurry, over twisted roots that tilted the forward heels of the wagon up, and into bogs that brought them down again with a right good will, over little log bridges tied together with withes of green beech, and under natural arches made by the interlacing of boughs all gorgeous in the drapery of autumn. They reached the ravine, whence a track had been recently cut through the trees and underbrush; and a mile's drive brought them to a fine clearing several acres in extent.

"Yankee Tom knows the road," whispered tiny Alice, clapping her little hands together and bursting into a clear, free laugh; then, stopping suddenly, she looked up half reproachfully into her companion's face and said, in a tone of chiding, "If you had only told *me*, Dirk!" The young man blushed (an exceedingly unfashionable thing, by the way, nowadays), and attempted to stammer out an apology, but Alice interrupted him.

"Never mind, Dirk—no matter, since 'tis over. We shall be very happy—that is *you* will and——"

"And you too, Alice."

Tiny Alice shook her head and looked very serious. "If you live in the bush, it will be very lonesome at the settlement, and I don't think anybody will be much happy!"

Dirk did not reply, for at that moment the horse of Yankee Tom drew up before a little dwelling closely embowered in forest trees, and vines transplanted from the low lands of Holland. Two or three blacks, all in a broad grin, appeared at the door, their large, white eyes assuming an unusual largeness and whiteness, whenever they chanced to fall on "Massa Dirk"; and, before Alice knew it, she found herself in just the neatest, prettiest little room, as she believed, in the wide world.

The room was soon crowded, and all were very merry. Then came a simple, solemn ceremony, and wild Dirk was no longer a "boy." The distribution of the bride's

cake, dear reader, to some of us would be very interesting; and the apple-pies, oleykoeks and other things that followed in the course of the day, with the grand feast toward evening, all deserve especial description; but there are individuals who would disapprove of this branching off from the sweets of sentiment to those of sense, and so I forbear.

And the bride? the sylvan demon? Ah, verily, Dirk had sold himself, soul and body, life and spirit, to a witch ten thousand times more puissant than the old lady of Endor. That eye! that deep, warm, dewy eye, leading you away down into the heart, and prisoning you there! the fresh, soft, downy cheek! the lips—two breathing flower-buds! those rare dimples gathering on the face and disappearing with every light and shadow of the heart! Oh, these were fearful snares! No wonder Yankee Tom had warned poor Dick against the machinations of the sylvan spirit, particularly as he had found himself beneath the influence of her magic spells only the day previous. Poor little Alice had never felt so proud as on that nuptial morning; and when the round, white arm of the bride encircled her neck, and wild Dirk, on the other hand, whispered a well-matured plan from which she was not excluded, the poor, pale hunchback grew almost straight, and her thin face put on a spiritual beauty which even the exquisite Egeria, to whom her benefactor owed his metamorphose, could not boast.

A charming little bird's nest soon nestled among the magnificent old trees, within an arrow's flight of the river's side, the home of light and love and benevolence; with no spirit to disturb the quiet of the scene, worse than the gentle, heart-subduing one who had tamed wild Dirk Van Deusen, rendering him not only a thinking being, but a useful man, and in time a prosperous and influential citizen.

It is rather unkind to the married portion of the community to print this amusing story, which is translated from the French of Pierre Berton for the Boston *Transcript*. In fact, nearly all the good stories of people who have passed their youth are not of the happily married. It is the bachelors and old maids, or the widows and widowers of different sorts, who supply the most available material for the romancist. Blissful domesticity is insipid —in fact, bread-and-buttery. The couple observed by Professor Ledieu were not exactly blissful.

PROFESSOR LEDIEU.

ACCORDING to his custom for several years, Professor Ledieu on Sunday evening, a few minutes before seven, turned the handle of the door that leads into the restaurant Cherbois, Place de la Sorbonne.

This particular Sunday was the 30th of May, 185–. After a glorious day the sun was setting behind the little hills of Meudon, purpling with his last rays the gables of the houses of the square and the old dome, which glistened under the pure azure of the heavens. All Paris had been rushing into the country since morning and was now returning in haste before nightfall. Everywhere the crowd, moving from the circumference to the centre, were filling the highways with bright toilets, gay countenances, ringing laughter and bundles of flowers, bringing into the depths of the old musty streets the assurance of spring and the perfumes of the country.

It was one of those calm and cheerful evenings in which every one has to feel in good humor with himself and the world. And yet when Professor Ledieu entered the restaurant he did not look at all in harmony with his surroundings. Under his left arm, as usual, he had a book and some pamphlets. He had just come from the country. This was indicated by his soft gray hat and his shoes white with dust. But evidently he did not bring with him the animation and gayety that were

visible on all faces outside. The maid behind the bar, whom he never missed saluting, noticed it.

It was not that Professor Ledieu's physiognomy was habitually lively; no, this could not be said of the professor, any more than it could be said it was habitually gloomy.

The precise shade was somewhat difficult to seize and especially to depict. It was rather a calmly smiling expression. Yes, Professor Ledieu smiled rather generally.

Only it was clear that this smile was not addressed to external objects, was not called forth by them, but was excited by an internal cause.

Thus every time Professor Ledieu entered the restaurant Cherbois, he smiled on the maid behind the bar. But undoubtedly this smile was not addressed to her. It did not owe its initial movement to the ripened charms of that estimable person, a woman of tact besides, who made no mistake about the matter.

It was at his own thought that Professor Ledieu smiled, and the internal satisfaction which the incessant work of his brain caused him was the sole motive that raised the corner of his lips. As soon as he entered into direct communication with the external world, his physiognomy changed, and passed at once from the expression of this inward satisfaction to that of profound astonishment.

When Leon, the waiter who usually served him, asked, for example, if he would like his asparagus with oil or white sauce, Professor Ledieu looked at him with an air of stupefaction, such as Ninippalukin himself, the first founder of the Assyrian Empire, thirteen centuries before our era, might have displayed if, after a sleep of three thousand years in his royal sarcophagus, he had awaked suddenly in the restaurant Cherbois, Place de la Sorbonne, face to face with Leon.

In fact, at the very moment when this delicate question was put to him, the thoughts of the learned professor were absorbed by the acts and deeds of this very Ninippalukin, generally known as Ninus; or by the triumphs of Merodach-Baladan over Tiglat-Pilezer, or the

intrigues by which Bel-Kat-Irassu succeeded in supplanting King Belochus; or perhaps the glorious wars of Assur-Bani-Pal, better known under the name of Sardanapalus, so that, in order to reply, it was necessary for him to pass suddenly by a cerebral effort from the banks of the Tigris to those of the Seine, from the palaces of Nineveh to the restaurant Cherbois, and from Semiramis to Leon, taking thus a single leap of four thousand five hundred miles and thirty-one centuries—an abrupt mental operation, a violent transition, which at first rendered him a little giddy.

Leon, accustomed to his oddities, never required an immediate answer. He waited a little before repeating his question, replying to the bewildered looks of the professor by an attitude of benevolent indulgence. After a certain time, the latter seemed at last to comprehend the difficulty in the case. But the question appeared undoubtedly more difficult to solve than the great historical problems of the ancient world. His eyes, diving into Leon's, sought a solution and said plainly, "What do you think of the matter?" Leon seized the psychological moment for extricating him from his painful uncertainty by prompting him to a decision. "Perhaps Monsieur likes them with oil?" or "What if we make a white sauce for Monsieur?" From what source did Leon draw his inspirations? Who taught him to lean now to one side, now to the other? Perhaps he was trying to effect an occasional change in the bill of fare of the scholar. But such a thing as the professor opposing Leon's opinion had never been heard of. As soon as the latter had spoken, he lost no time in assenting by a motion of his head, and the waiter had hardly turned away when a smile took the place of the perplexity expressed by the face of his client. Professor Ledieu had returned to Nineveh.

It is worthy of notice that he always returned to Nineveh with much more eagerness and ease than he came back from it—proof positive that he was quite at home there.

With a bow to the maid behind the bar, Professor Ledieu turned to the left and seated himself at a table

placed in a corner beside the window, which was kept vacant for him each Sunday. He was treated with the greatest respect—not that he spent a great deal; he always dined alone, and his modest repast in no way recalled the legendary festivals of the Ninevite hero, Assur-Bani-Pal. But he had come once every week for the last twenty years, and was reverenced as the oldest and most faithful patron of the establishment. Then, although he had not yet acquired the renown which his learning has since gained him, he was already a celebrity in the Latin Quarter.

His study on the syllabary cuneiform alphabets was now translated into all languages; the publication of his Rabbinical Aramæan-French dictionary had won for him the cross of the Legion of Honor. The Academy was taking notice of him; he was expected to succeed Dubois Saint-Yves, and his life in short was developing in fine and regular order, animated by one single passion, the love of science, embellished by success and by that complete felicity which the continued employment of his true faculties can alone give to man.

Why did this happy individual seem so unhappy on this evening? After giving his hat to Leon, he sat down abruptly, threw his pamphlets on the table with a frown, and, when the waiter placed the bill of fare for the day in his hands, he perused it with a gloomy stare, as if he was reading there his sentence of death.

When Leon came to help him in making up his menu, he agreed silently with all the opinions of the waiter, but without responding this time with the benevolent smile with which he was in the habit of thanking him, and, as Leon disappeared, crying, "A printanier for one!" he murmured, "What can have happened to monsieur le professeur this evening?"

However firm his will, what man is there who has not had his hour of discouragement? However plainly his way may be traced before him, who has not asked himself once in his life, "Have I followed my true path?"

This same day Professor Ledieu had entered his forty-ninth year. Attracted by the glorious sun, he had gone

to take his Sunday walk in the woods of Meudon. By what odd reaction did it happen that all the joys of Nature condensed themselves into a profound sadness in his soul? How was it that this intellect, so well balanced, instead of pursuing the laborious dreams that made the enchantment of his whole life, should suddenly lay him flat in the groove of human realities?

Stopping to think for a moment, he looked around him. Here and there, in the country, people were coming and going, laughing and chattering, families overflowing with little children, groups of noisy young people, lovers seeking the solitudes, all were passing before his eyes, crossing him without even giving a single glance in his direction, and he only was alone.

Yes, alone with phantoms; Tiglat-Pilezer, Bel-Kat-Irassu, Sennacherib, Salmanazar, Semiramis—phantoms that haunt, penetrate and envelop him. And now the intensity of the life that surrounds him makes this intimacy of his with the dead appear sinister to him. He is thinking that in a few hours he will be sitting alone at dinner, will then return to his obscure lodging, will light his lamp, and there, too, will be alone in raising up his spectres; and for the first time in his life this abandonment weighs upon him, and he complains, and he suffers from that which till now he had considered the chief food of life—solitude.

He had so valiantly defended his beloved solitude! He had so resolutely banished from his path all that could jeopardize his independence and disturb him in that continuous labor of thinking which is the supreme pleasure of the scholar and the artist! The great enemy of this intellectual concentration is woman. Therefore he had an instinctive fear of woman; therefore he had pitilessly eliminated her from his life. He had so far escaped from every chain, and he had felt a kind of pride in the fact.

And now, suddenly, regret for his misogyny took possession of him, and this on the very day when he was forty-eight years old—that is to say, when it was too late to escape the consequences of it. And now his beloved solitude became odious to him, still more odious

from the fact that it was irreparable. And now the longing for feminine tenderness, for the family life, sprang up in him, held him fast, the more alluring that it could no longer be realized.

This thought seized him with irresistible force; it took entire possession of him. He walked with it the whole day, gloomy and despondent, under the blue sky and amid the verdure. He brought it back with him in the evening to Paris. He sat down with it at his solitary table at the restaurant Cherbois. It absorbed him to such an extent while he was eating his "printanier" that he did not see a new group of guests enter and take their places opposite him. But Leon having replaced the "printanier" by a "gigot Bretonne," as the professor was about to swallow the first mouthful, and had raised his eyes mechanically, the picture presented to him was such that he let fall his arm and fork, and remained open-mouthed, not tasting a morsel.

The group which thus riveted the attention of Professor Ledieu consisted of four persons; husband, wife and two children, evidently a family belonging to the class of little Parisian shopkeepers, who dine at the restaurant on Sundays, in order to give a holiday to the woman who does the cooking for the household the other days of the week.

She was pretty, this young mother. Her beautiful chestnut hair framed a rather refined face, somewhat pale, with irregular features, but lit up by two large laughing eyes. She had the roguish, self-possessed air of the Parisienne out for a holiday, as indefatigable in pleasure as in labor. With a graceful movement her two hands rose on a level with her head to take off her hat, throwing her fine figure into relief as she bent backward, while the two children, a little girl of about seven and a boy somewhat younger, clung to her. While replying to the questions of her husband, a brisk, squat, little fellow, with waxed mustache, hair brushed back from his forehead and the gait of a corporal, who was asking her opinion on the bill of fare, she took off the children's hats and arranged them at the table, and soon, the whole family being seated, the boy near the mother,

the girl beside the father, the dinner began with a noise of dishes and forks, with laughter and the chirping of children, in fine with an air of noisy merriment that completed the melancholy of the professor.

It was not enough that during the entire day the thought of his isolation had pursued and tortured him. It was still necessary that the spectacle of the happiness he had so long disdained, which he regretted now and to which he could never henceforward aspire, should be paraded under his very eyes. And yet these people were not very fortunate. It only required a glance to tell that their life was laborious and hard, their toil incessant, without hope of fortune possible. Whence did they derive that fine temper, that contented air, that joy, if not from mutual love and the common affection for the little beings sprung from them—in a word, from the family life?

Thus was clearly demonstrated to him the natural law he had disowned. How could he have taken so long to comprehend that man is not made solely for the purpose of burrowing in tombs and deciphering puzzles, and that there are other pleasures in this world besides adding a name to the incomplete list of the kings of Nineveh or a date to Assyrian chronology? He saw it well now. The true sense of life was revealed to him. As to the joys one has lost, there remains at least the memory of having tasted them. But are there any regrets more bitter than those for a happiness we might have enjoyed, and yet have voluntarily deprived ourselves of? Wifely tenderness, the laughter of children, household pleasures, mental rest and relaxation—what a clear idea he had now of all this! How he felt its value, and how he understood that for him it was all over, over forever!

"Monsieur does not eat his mutton?"

Professor Ledieu raised his saddened eyes to Leon, who was watching him with anxious solicitude, then lowered them immediately on his plate.

Absorbed in the contemplation of his neighbors and by the painful thoughts the sight of them suggested, he had remained without eating, fork in hand, for now

nearly half-an-hour. A pale layer of grease had formed on the surface of the "gigot Bretonne." It looked like a kind of frozen pond in his plate, from which the meat emerged as a barren isle and the beans like little scattered rocks. Still he resisted the attempts of Leon to have the whole rewarmed. Cold mutton was good enough for an old wretch, deserted by everybody, who was never to know the delights of a comfortable home, the attentions and caresses of a loving wife, and he began to eat with a kind of fury.

At this moment the voice of the little girl was raised—

"I say, Robert, will you stop!"

It seems that young Robert was not disposed to yield to the entreaties of his sister, for, after a few minutes, the latter cried—

"Papa, make Robert stop; he is kicking me under the table."

"Come, come, Robert, be quiet," said the mother, and she resumed her conversation with her husband.

But the amiable Robert did not appear to have more respect for the maternal commands than for the entreaties of his sister. Having assured himself by a glance that his father was not attending to him, and yielding to that need of motion which children feel at table when it is impossible for them to eat more, he continued the sport that amused him, and stretched his legs energetically in the direction of those of his sister.

Unhappily for him, the latter, foreseeing the attack, had drawn her chair back out of his reach. The clever child, seeing that he could no longer reach her without projectiles, found nothing better to do than to steep his hand in the colored water in his glass, and sprinkle his little sister, who uttered loud cries.

"Papa, he has stained my dress."

The father, furious at being interrupted, turned toward his son and darted a menacing look at him.

"Wait a little," he shouted, "you are going to have such a whipping as you never had in your life!"

The criminal, seeing already the paternal hand suspended over his head, made a terrified movement, when,

unfortunately, his arm encountered the glass of colored water. The glass and the child lost their balance at the same moment, the glass spilling all the liquid it contained on the mother's gown, the child catching at the table cloth and dragging with it to the floor bottles and glasses, plates and dishes, sauces and viands. Heavens, what a noise! The waiters run up; the mother wipes herself; the children roar, and the father swears like a trooper, while young Robert is being picked up.

"You infernal young scoundrel!" shouts the father.

The child bellows louder than ever. The mother in a fury interferes and says to her husband—

"It is your fault, too!"

"How, my fault?"

"Yes, your fault!"

"Well, that's rather good, that is!"

"If you had not frightened him, this would never have happened."

"Ought I to let him behave so abominably without minding it?"

"That's no reason why you should knock him down. No one ought to be such a brute with a baby like that."

"What! knock him down? Why, I haven't even touched him."

"Oh, you might restrain yourself a little!"

"I would never have to slap his ears if you did not give him his own way always."

"Oh, yes, of course, it's my fault now!"

"Yes, it is your fault!"

"Do you dare to say that to my face?"

Professor Ledieu lost nothing of the scene, and, in proportion as it developed, the smile spread again over his lips. Now, without ceasing to listen, he was eating his asparagus (in oil, according to the advice of Leon).

His neighbors attacked each other with increasing acrimony. The replies exchanged became more bitter, and in this oratorical struggle it was easy to see the husband would not get the upper hand. His wife bombarded him with words so rapidly that he no longer found an answer. She had extinguished his fire.

"And for all that, what pleasure have I ever had in my life? Nursing children, cooking, a maid-of-all-work, indeed! Ah! it was my luck to have met with such a good-for-nothing as you! And Monsieur complains! Well, if you are not content, you have only to say so."

The husband, annoyed at seeing himself the object of all eyes, tried to make her at least lower her voice. "Humbug! little I care who hears me!"

The dispute between husband and wife lasted through the dessert, which the professor was enjoying with ever-increasing cheerfulness. Then Professor Ledieu, having paid his bill and given Leon a tip so unusually large as to make that functionary open his eyes, replaced his book and pamphlets under his arm, left the restaurant Cherbois and directed his steps to the Rue de Monsieur le Prince, thinking with delight that in the calm and solitude of his little apartment, all encumbered with books, he would again find Tiglat-Pilezer, Assur-Bani-Pal and Queen Semiramis.

Very strange things have happened, but as to whether the hero of the following story really could have seen this wonderful vision, opinions may differ. However, these dear old stories of ancient historic piles, with haunted wings, and daggers, and faded tapestries, and mysterious miniatures, must not be lost from among us. This particular one was written for ROMANCE by Jean Dair.

THE PORTRAIT OF LADY BEATRICE.

I REMEMBER perfectly how it happened. I received an invitation from my old friend and fellow-artist, Stanly Harcourt, to spend a week with him at Harcourt Park. It was early in the season, and only a few other guests were invited. Although my friendship with Stanly dated back to days at Eton, I had never visited the Park, and I accepted with alacrity.

Before starting, I slipped into my pocket my latest purchase at "the old curiosity shop"—a bracelet of twisted gold, with a miniature on it, surrounded by diamonds. This out-of-the-way corner in London, called by Stanly "the den," and which I had christened, "the curiosity shop," attracted us frequently. Here we bought a good deal of our studio paraphernalia—effective drapery, swords, and old armor.

The bracelet, I felt convinced, had a history, although Mr. Isaac, sole proprietor of the shop, could give me no information concerning it. He had purchased it a few months before at the bankrupt sale of L——, the celebrated jeweller. The gold, Mr. Isaac remarked, was good, but the brilliants were off color, and the miniature of doubtful execution. I did not agree with him on the last point, for I admired the portrait extremely. It represented a man of about eight-and-twenty, with a sad, pensive face, which reminded me of the Kramer portrait of Burns, although it fell a little short of the ideal beauty of that picture. From the dress,—high rolling collar and stock,—I concluded that it had been painted some time in the fifties. It attracted

me strangely from the first, nor was I content until I had become the owner of it. The sum paid was, no doubt, but a fraction of its real value, for although Mr. Isaac was a Jew, he would often let us have things for a mere song. Perhaps he was not wholly disinterested in these transactions, knowing well that we would speak a good word for him. Indeed, we gave the little shop quite a boom, and one particular style of candle-stick became so popular that it was known as "the Isaac."

I considered the bracelet a treasure, and I anticipated surprising Stanly with my good fortune, at the same time making him quite green with envy.

Arriving at my destination, I found a cordial welcome. Stanly made an ideal host, while Lady Harcourt, his mother, did the honors most gracefully. His sister Edith I had not seen for years, and I found her a charming girl—tall and superbly proportioned, with reddish brown hair and that wild rose complexion which seems to belong exclusively to English maids,—with all due admiration for my American cousins.

And as for Harcourt Park, it was fascinating.

The house was of gray stone, a rambling structure which had been remodelled, until hardly a trace of its original design remained. The older parts—the tower and outer stair-case—were almost in ruins, and were covered with ivy.

"You are to choose your room, old fellow," said Stanly, as we were exploring the grounds. "What will you have? Tower, time of Queen Bess; east wing,—Charles II; west wing,—Queen Anne; northern projection,—George I; southern projection, George III; and the rest, grand medley, principally Victoria in the thirty-fifth year of her reign. You see you can choose any period of history and your favorite sovereign, but if you have an eye to comfort, I should recommend Victoria."

"Isn't there a haunted chamber?" I asked. "Such a mixture ought to develop something of that sort, and I am particularly fond of ghosts. Wait a moment," I continued, not heeding my companion, "I see just what I want. Look! the three windows up there. No!

higher up—to the right, with the stone ledges and blue hangings."

My friend's face fell.

"Really, Hal, I am afraid it's impossible. It hasn't been occupied for years. In fact, when the whole house was put in repair, that room and the one next to it were left out. My mother had a little sentiment about them, for they belonged to my father's favorite brother; he is dead, you know. Still, if you don't mind being rather uncomfortable, it might be managed."

"It was merely a whim," I answered. "I was thinking what a glorious view you must get from the last window; but of course I shall be delighted with any other. Pray don't give it a thought."

"I have no earthly objection," Stanly continued, "and I doubt if my mother has. Your traps have been carried up to the room next mine, but Wilson shall move them."

When Lady Harcourt was asked, she graciously consented, but I noticed that she seemed absent-minded all that evening, and I feared that I had stirred up unpleasant memories.

When the room was shown me, I could hardly suppress an exclamation of surprise and delight.

"You admire it, I see," said Stanly. "Nearly everybody does."

"Admire!" I answered. "Admire is a poor word. It is superb."

The walls were hung with gobelin-blue tapestry. The wood-work was ivory-white, and the ceiling was beautifully carved in arabesques of gold. Above the hangings, in the wide, curved frieze, were medallion portraits of the court of Louis XIV.

The furniture was very beautiful, and in perfect harmony with the decorations. There were luxurious divans, such as Madame de Maintenon might have reclined upon, exquisite tables of inlaid wood, and dainty chairs of blue-and-gold.

One article, a writing-table, heavily inlaid, was apparently all ready for use, with a bewitching array of

materials—trays and candle-sticks of Dresden china, wax of palest colors, and a little pile of tapers.

The bed was a massive structure, with a canopy of old blue brocade.

"And you would never have shown me this, if I had not insisted on taking possession?"

"We often show the room, but it is seldom occupied —I might say, never."

"But it is in such perfect condition!"

Stanly smiled a little sadly. "My mother's orders!"

"This room has a history, I know. How came it to be furnished so beautifully, and in such a different way from the rest of the house? On the whole, I think I prefer the old oak and rugs, but for one room, it is superb," and I found myself repeating the only adjective that seemed fitting.

"Yes, it has a history. My father's brother had it fitted up for his bride. It was the reigning fashion then—early in the fifties. He died shortly after his marriage, and the room has never been occupied, save once or twice; but it is a long story. I will tell you later; say to-morrow, when we have more time."

The evening passed off agreeably, and it was late when we retired.

"Happy dreams, Hal," said Stanly, as he left me at the door.

By the light of the candles, the room was more beautiful than ever. The faces from the frieze seemed to look down upon me. There were Madame Maintenon, cold and cynical; La Vallière; mild and gentle fascinating Madame de Rambouillet; and Julie d'Argennes, fairest of all.

What was the mystery connected with the room? What secret did these patched and powdered ladies guard? I found that I could not drive the subject from my mind, and after I had gone to bed, and lay looking up at the ceiling, the gold tracery dimly visible in the moonlight, I still wondered what it could be.

I do not know how long I had slept, when I was awakened most suddenly. There was no noise—not a sound pervaded the room—and yet I sat up in bed wide

awake. The silence seemed oppressive, almost suffocating. I scanned the room to see if everything was the same as when I went to bed. Yes, the position of each chair and table was identical. I looked up at the faces. They were one confused mass. Then I followed the tapestry hangings with my eyes, beginning at the left and looking into every fold. As I neared the right, my attention was riveted on what seemed to be a full-length portrait of a young and beautiful girl. How, in my close examination of the room, I had failed to notice it, seemed to me inexplicable.

The light that streamed in from an adjacent window showed every line. The face was pale, with dark, luminous eyes, while the hair, equally dark, was parted and puffed slightly on the sides. As nearly as I could make out, it was the fashion of thirty or forty years back. The gown was white, soft and clinging, with short waist and loose sleeves. The frame seemed lost in darkness, but the face and figure were wonderfully clear.

I now felt certain that the picture was not there when I entered the room, and yet, how was its existence to be accounted for?

Could the wind have drawn back the tapestry, thus revealing some old family portrait? And who was this charming girl?

I now noticed points which had escaped me at first,—the exquisite moulding of the arms and hands, the jewelled dagger in the coils of dark hair, which even in paint seemed to change and flash, and the background, which appeared to be copied from the very tapestry of the room. The face fascinated me. The eyes, so dark and magnetic, seemed to burn beneath their arched brows, and as I gazed, they drooped, almost closed, then dilated.

Good heavens! this could be no portrait. *The arms were moving!*

The hands clasped and then fluttered to the sides; then slowly went up to the head, and took the dagger from the black coils of hair.

Surely this was no painted canvas. I tried to rise,—to reach for the bell, but I seemed bound hand and

foot. Every trace of energy had left me. It was as if my own life and activity had been transferred to the figure before me, leaving me lifeless as clay. As I looked, the girl bent her head over the dagger, and when she raised it, I shuddered. The face was beautiful still, but every bit of feeling was gone, leaving it cold, sinister, cruel. Then she raised her arms high above her head, and the lips moved. No sound came, but I felt that in that moment she had made a vow. The lips parted as if in laughter. All was silent, but it was so hard and cruel! Then all grew confused! The face and figure seemed to melt away. I closed my eyes for a moment, and when I looked again, the background of the picture seemed the same, but here the resemblance ceased.

On a low divan reclined a man, of perhaps nine-and-twenty. His eyes were closed; his face was very pale; but it was not the pallor of death. His dress corresponded in period with that of the girl's gown, although he looked ten years her senior.

The face was very familiar. Somewhere,—and I racked my brain in vain to remember where,—I had seen that face. Every line I knew. How long the man reclined thus, I cannot tell. It seemed hours. It was in all probability a few moments, perhaps only seconds. A door seemed to open somewhere in the rear, and the girl entered. She bent down over the man and listened; then softly knelt at his side. When she rose, the jewelled dagger slipped to the floor. Her hands trembled now, but the face remained unchanged.

Once more all grew indistinct, and when I could distinguish form and color, I seemed to be looking into a room, paneled with oak, from floor to ceiling. Before one panel stood the girl. Her hand moved uncertainly over it, and then chose the next one. It opened, as if by magic, disclosing a space about a foot square. Into this she dropped the dagger. For the third time the colors mingled, and again I was looking at the motionless figure on the divan. His face seemed like alabaster in contrast with his dark hair. One hand, delicate as a woman's, hung at his side. Suddenly it flashed

across me that the face before me was identical with the miniature on the bracelet. Yes, every feature was the same. The high rolling collar and stock which he wore completed the resemblance. Had it been in my power to sink back on my pillow, I certainly should have done so at this discovery, but as movement of any kind on my part was impossible, I could only gasp.

Near the divan stood the girl. Her arms hung motionless at her sides. She was almost as pale as he, save her lips, which were scarlet. Her beauty repelled and yet fascinated me. Never had I beheld such a face. She shivered slightly, and slowly, very slowly, sank down at his side. Her hair became unfastened and fell over her like a veil. For one instant, I closed my eyes. The horror of it was overpowering. When I opened them, she lay as if lifeless, and her hair, no longer black, gleamed in the moonlight like driven snow.

A moment later, there was only the tapestry stirring in the wind.

Then I lost consciousness, and when I came to my senses, the sun was high in the heavens. Before descending the stairs, I took the bracelet from the case, for a close examination. There was no room for mistake; the face and that which I had seen in the night were one and the same.

To come down from that chamber to the cosy breakfast-room seemed like stepping from one world into another. It may have been imagination, but I fancied that all regarded me rather curiously.

Lady Harcourt was the first to break the silence. "You rested well, I trust?" she said quietly, but, as I thought, with veiled interest.

I answered briefly in the affirmative.

"And had pleasant dreams, Hal?" inquired Stanly.

"I don't think I dreamed at all," I replied, and the subject was dropped.

Immediately after breakfast, I found an opportunity to remind my host of his promise in regard to the room. It is needless to say that I was now doubly anxious to know its history.

An hour later, we were seated alone in the small library, acknowledged by all to be Stanly's special property.

"It is a long story," he said, "and I hardly know where to begin, but perhaps it would be as well to get to the point at once. First, let me say that it is only my great friendship for you, Halstone, that leads me to speak of this. It is something we seldom mention.

"My uncle, Lord Stanly, for whom I am named, was my father's eldest brother. He married a Miss Hartwell, Beatrice Hartwell, the only child of old Harold Hartwell. She was beautiful, wonderfully beautiful, but absolutely without heart. At least, so I am told; of course I know nothing of her, for this was over thirty years ago. But her beauty is almost a tradition. There is a miniature of her, which I will show you later and you can judge for yourself.

"Before her marriage with Lord Stanly, she had been engaged to Cecil Richie, her cousin. You know of the Richies?"

I nodded.

"It was broken off, and she married my uncle. He was a better match, of course; but now when I think of it all, I believe she always cared for Richie.

"Well, my uncle had the west rooms fitted up, and she came here a bride. I will show you the second one later. It is panelled entirely in oak—rather interesting in its way."

The book I was toying with fell to the floor.

"It was only a short time after the wedding that a very strange thing happened."

He stopped short and glanced quickly around the room.

"Edith knows nothing of this," he said. Then, dropping his voice, he continued:

"It was in September,—the eleventh, I think."

"Last night," I said softly.

Stanly did not hear me.

"A large party was given, and half the county was here; among others, Cecil Richie. I remember my old nurse telling me how beautiful Lady Beatrice looked

in her white gown and jewels. She had magnificent jewels, by the way. That evening at dinner, a strange thing happened, and my old nurse used to say it was an omen of what followed.

"Beatrice wore a pair of bracelets—Stanly's bridal gift. They were of twisted gold, each with a miniature surrounded by diamonds. One represented Lord Stanly; the other, her ladyship. It was a quaint fancy, carried out by a famous French artist."

I sank back in my chair.

"Why, good heavens, Hal, how pale you are! Why, what is the matter, man?"

"Nothing," I answered. "Go on! Your tale interests me strangely."

"After dinner, as the ladies were leaving the dining-room, Lady Beatrice drew back the portières for them to pass out. As she did so, one of the bracelets caught in the meshes of the curtain, and although of excellent workmanship, or apparently so, when it was disentangled, it was in pieces. It seemed a trifle at the time, but superstitious people remembered it."

"Was it the bracelet containing her portrait?" I asked.

"No, it was his."

Stanly rose from his chair and paced the room, looking at me in some anxiety.

"Odd, how the mere relating of something you know only by hearsay stirs you up."

He seated himself and continued:

"The guests were late in taking their departure, and it was long after midnight when the family retired. My uncle had gone to his room somewhat earlier, not feeling particularly well.

"That night," and his voice sank to a whisper, "he was murdered; yes, *murdered* in his own house. Next morning, they found him stretched lifeless on one of the blue divans, and Lady Beatrice unconscious, at his side."

I leaned back in my chair, while a feeling of deadly faintness came over me. I could hardly breathe.

"There is little more to tell," Stanly continued.

"The deed was done; there was no doubt of that, but *who did it* is, to this day, a mystery. Of course, many were suspected, but suspicion fell chiefly on——"

I waited in suspense.

He paused a moment and then said softly:

"*Cecil Richie.* It was brought out that he was the last to leave the house, and his devotion to Beatrice was an open secret."

"Who else?" I managed to ask.

"An old family servant, who disappeared soon after with one of the maids. But what possible motive could he have had? He was devoted to Lord Stanly and always had been, and was a favorite with the whole household. At this time certain jewels also disappeared. The dagger that Lady Beatrice wore in her hair that very night was never seen again, and the broken bracelet seems to have melted into thin air, too. I regret the loss of the latter extremely, for it was the sole portrait of Lord Stanly, and the marked resemblance he bore to my father would have made it doubly precious. Then the diamonds made it very valuable, for they were of the purest water. The servant, as I said, disappeared, and Cecil Richie, evidently finding English air not quite to his taste, went abroad and to all appearance dropped out of existence."

"Was no one else suspected?"

"My mother," and Stanly again dropped his voice, "had one theory, which differed from that of everybody else, and that was, that Lady Beatrice herself did the deed." He paused for me to take in the full import of the words.

"Poor mother! She never liked Beatrice. There had always been a good deal of girlish rivalry between them, and I sometimes think Richie was at the bottom of that, too."

"Rather odd," I interrupted, "providing they cared for one man, that they should have afterward married brothers."

"Yes, the whole affair from beginning to end is strange, and one I should certainly doubt, if I were to hear it from any one else."

"What is your own theory, Stanly? Do you agree with your mother?"

"Do you think I am mad?" he replied. "How could I believe a young girl capable of such a thing? She was heartless; but good heavens! it takes more than lack of heart to do such a deed! I should suspect Captain Richie far sooner, and yet all his conduct was very straightforward and manly at the time. But as for Lady Beatrice, why, man, it nearly killed her. In that one night, her hair turned white as snow. Oh, they say she was 'regal,' and that she was far lovelier than ever before. People were not at all surprised when five years later she became Countess de Rousillon. Poor Beatrice! misfortunes followed her. It was a very unhappy marriage and, to crown all, her only child was stolen. Kidnapping seems to have been in vogue, twenty years ago; only this child was never recovered. It is small wonder that the Countess died of a broken heart."

I rose from my seat and went to the window. "Stanly," I said, "who has occupied that room since the affair?"

"Two persons."

"Do you mean to say that I am only the third?"

"Why, yes! What is it! You don't mean you saw or heard anything? The servants call the room haunted, but that is scarcely to be wondered at. Besides, in these enlightened times ghosts are out of fashion."

"Tell me about the other two," I persisted.

"The others—why, one was my cousin—and it was years ago. He was taken ill that night with a raging fever, and died a few weeks later. But the room had nothing to do with it. The doctors said it had been in his system for weeks. The other was a little scatter-brained French governess. She was put in there, when the house was crowded with guests. She was a queer thing,—believed in spiritualism and all that, and I was not surprised to hear of her becoming insane."

"One died," I muttered, "one became insane. I wonder—" At this moment, the door opened and

Edith stood on the threshold. She made a charming picture in her simple cotton gown and garden hat.

"May I ask the meaning of this solemn conclave?" she said. "I don't think it's a bit kind of you, Stanly," turning to her brother, "to drag Mr. Craig off to this stuffy room when the tennis court is just suffering to be used."

"I will compel him to release me as soon as possible," I answered gayly, and the door closed.

"I fear I have been rather selfish, Hal."

"Not at all. I haven't had my say yet. First let me ask if you have ever doubted my sanity; that is, you have believed me to be of tolerably sound intellect."

"Generally—yes," laughed Stanly.

"Very well then, listen to what I am about to say, and never again express your disbelief in ghosts."

I began disconnectedly, but before I had gone very far, my friend was as white and speechless as I could wish.

"Now," said I, "let me see Lady Beatrice's portrait, for that will be the final test, and after that, I have something to show you," and I drew out the little box. When Stanly returned with the bracelet, I gave a cry, for the face that looked out from its frame of diamonds was the one I had seen the night before—the same dark eyes, the puffed hair—even the gown was not unlike. The bracelet was of twisted gold, the only difference in the two being that the diamonds in mine were of inferior quality, and a suspicion now flashed across me that they were not the original stones.

"Now," said I, "you must see my latest purchase from Isaac," and with considerable pride, I opened the box and handed it to Stanly. I have seen surprise depicted on the human countenance, but I never saw, nor have I seen since, quite such an expression as came into my friend's face. After that, our talk was absorbing, and it is needless to say that Edith and tennis were forgotten. Stanly was eager to go to London, find L—— and ferret out the bracelet mystery at once.

Later in the day, we examined the panelled room, but no amount of tapping and pressing would reveal

the hidden recess. That night, we watched in the white-and-gold room, but the silent guests did not appear. The rest of the week passed off delightfully. Edith and I became excellent friends. When I left Harcourt Park, I carried away two distinct impressions, one of Lady Beatrice and the other of Edith Harcourt.

Stanly and I spent a fruitless week in searching for L——, and when we at last found that worthy, the information which he gave us was anything but satisfactory. He remembered vaguely about the bracelet. It was left to be mended years ago—he thought, by a woman—and was never called for. As for removing the diamonds, he was shocked that one of his high standing should be accused of such a thing. As for the Jew, he had purchased the bracelet at his sale when many such articles went for nothing—positively nothing.

Almost immediately, I began a full-length portrait of Lady Beatrice, as I first beheld her against the tapestry hangings. I had the miniature as a guide, but that was scarcely necessary, for her face haunted me continually. One morning when the picture was nearly finished, I received the following telegram from Stanly:

"*West wing totally destroyed by fire. I send you something found in the ruins.*"

A box arrived later, and when opened, disclosed a dagger of quaint workmanship. It was dim with rust and the blade was badly damaged, but the jewels were in perfect condition.

The portrait was finished. It won me fame and fortune, and fame and fortune won Lady Harcourt's consent to my marriage with her daughter.

The picture was purchased by Henry A. Dearborn, a wealthy New Yorker, who valued it for the wonderful resemblance it bore to his daughter—an adopted daughter, but dear to him as his own flesh and blood.

And so the portrait of Beatrice Harcourt passed out of my life, but the memory of that terrible night can never be effaced.

In this realistic tale of the old slave days, Mr. Henry Clay Fairman, editor of *The Sunny South*, describes some of the most characteristic phases of the life of that extraordinary period in the history of civilization.

"DAT FOOT-RACE."

"De nigger-dogs wuz sho' 'nuff bad, Boss. No two ways 'bout dat."

The speaker's kinky hair was almost snow-white, and he was nearer to seventy than to sixty; but his body was straight, well-knit and well-proportioned, and his wits were too keen to belong to a man who felt his age. Having myself many personal recollections of "slavery times," I like to hear old negroes talk on the subject, and it was in response to questions that the above remark was made. I continued:

"Uncle Jake, were you ever 'run' by the dogs?"

"Now, Boss," answered the old man, with a pretence of walking away, "whuf fur you gwine back to dem ole times? Don' yuh know dis is Sunday? De bad man git me ef I go tellin' tales on uh Sunday. 'Sides, da gwine hab 'lidgus suvices 't my house t'night en I want uh 'pose my min' fuh it. Don' lak talk much 'bout dem slave times no how. Wat put yo' min' runnin' 'bout de nigger-dogs en paterrollers, anyhow?"

A more garrulous old rascal doesn't live than old Jake. Fill his pipe with good plug chippings, and he'll lie on the green grass with half-shut eyes and spin yarns for hours. He only wanted to be coaxed.

"Well, den, ef I mus', I reckin I mus'," he said at length, when I firmly refused postponement. "I did had uh race wid de dogs wunst. En' I ain' gwine fergit it needer. No, sah; don't you bleebe I gwine fergit dat foot-race long's my name's Jake Cobu'n.

"Y'u see, Boss," he went on, throwing himself on the sward and propping his head with hand and elbow, "it wus 'long in de forties, en consarned a gal I wuz flyin'

roun' dem days, en I gwine tell you how it all come uhbout.

"My moster, Tom Cobu'n, wuz ez good uh man ez de Lawd uver made. Me en him wuz raised up boys t'gedder, en we's des lak brudders. I 'uz three fo' year de oldes', en I wait on 'im en tek all de hard jobs off'n 'im. Ef 'e want 'is pony, I saddle 'im. Ef we go hunt'n, I turns de squir'l en totes de game. Ef we go fish'n, I digs de bait. En we don' had no trouble. Mos Tom nuver strook me uh lick in 'is life. Mos Tom 'ud fight fuh me any time, en I'd des die fuh Mos Tom.

"Well, bimeby, Mos Tom he grow'd up t' uh man, en got ma'id 'e did, en I went long t' lib wid 'im fuh 'is body-suvunt. En seein' et Mos Tom he so happy 'long wid 'is putty young wife, hit put me to 'flectin 'heap 'bout j'inin' 'long wid Susan. She b'long'd t' Mos Tom's wife, en wur uh mighty snipshus gal, no mustake 'bout dat. But Mis' Sarah (dat Mos Tom's wife) she 'posed de match, 'case she say Susan to' young. En t' be sho', she wur young, 'bout sixteen,—but she pow'ful willin, 'en yu' know, Boss, dat mek uh man mighty ankshus 'bout dem things. But I cain he'p myself, en me en Susan hab tuh wait. En so it wus dat 'bout two year goes by, en den Mos Tom he tuk t' drinkin,' en he was'e 'is prop'ty, en run 'issef in debt scand'lus. En den I des knowd sump'n gwine ter drap. Money got t' be raised, en niggers gwine t' be sole. Mos Tom look 'shamed wen he 'fess 'e done put me in uh mawgige. I beg hard fuh 'im t' sabe me, en 'e try mighty hard, en 'e look mighty mis'ubble. But it ain' no use. He done went too fur wid 'is stravagunce, en wen de sale-day come 'e got on uh turribul spree.

"I tell yu', Boss, my heart sink down in my ole brogans wen I seen ole Bill Norton at dat sale. He wur de mos' turribles man in all dem parts. He had dem sharp black eyes, en co'se whisku's dat 'mine yuh ub uh robber. En wen 'e 'gin t' bid fuh me I des 'gin up in despa'r. Fuh I know'd fum 'is looks 'e gwine t' git me, en 'e did git me. He seen I wus disp'inted, en 'e say 'D—— y'u, I'll put y'u in uh good 'umor. You one

dem spi'lt niggers dat needs straight'nen out. Tom Cobu'n no 'co'nt t' manige niggers.'

"But I don't say nuth'n back t' 'im, I des hilt my tongue, fuh I know'd it nuver do t' cross dat man.

"Susan, she wus on de block dare, too, en I beg ole Col. Barnes on de sly t' buy 'er. I tell 'im I hear 'um say 'e want uh lakly waitin-gal fuh 'is wife, en dat Susan she des fill de bill. He done so en I thank 'im wid my eyes. I druther lib sep'rit fum de gal den lib wid 'er in Bill Nort'n's han's. Eb'ry body praise ole man Barnes en 'is wife fuh da goodness to da black people.

"So my new moster 'e tuk me 'ome wid 'im, en I done de bes' I could t' git 'long widout trouble. My back never aint had no whuppin' 'fo' dat time, en I 'solve t' keep Bill Norton in uh good 'umor, fuh I heard 'nuff 'bout 'im t' know he's one dem men wot lub t' hear uh nigger baig, en I knows he's des uh waiten fuh uh good 'scuse t' tan my hide.

"'Fo' long I 'gin to 'member heap 'bout Susan. I want to see 'er mighty bad uhgin. She done saunt me word by uh black 'oman dat she might'ly tuk up wid 'er new mistis, en ax'd me t' min' out en not mek Mr. Nort'n mad wid me. Now I des know'd all dat word did'n mean noth'n 'tall 'cep'n Susan want me come en' see 'er, en it mek me ez res'less ez a fish out'n watah. So I 'clude I'd ax Mr. Nort'n fuh uh pass t' go ober t' Col. Barnesis. In dem days, Boss, niggers could'n go nowhar widout passis. Ef patterroller ketch yu widout yo' pass, 'e burn y' up. Mek yuh blebe yuh sot uhfiah. Dem wil' young men wot use ter watch der roads in de night, don't wan' no bettuh fun 'an t' ketch uh darkey 'dout 'is pass."

"Uncle Jake, do you remember the wording of the passes that were used?"

"Oh yes, I rickollect de berry words. My young Mos Tom Cobu'n, he writ 'um fuh me frum de time 'e fust l'arnt t' write. Ole Mos—dat's Mos Tom's daddy—he made Mos Tom practice uh writin' uh passis. Mos Tom, 'e read um out t' me many uh time, en it went dis way: 'Let de bearer, Tom Cobu'n, pass en repass

'till Monday mawnin' sun-rise.' Da allus give passis Sad'day nights.

"So I ax fuh de pass mighty humble, en Bill Nort'n 'e look at me quick en mad, en say gruff:

"'No! I don't 'low my niggers t' run uhbout. Ef y'u want uh git ma'id, plenty gals here. Yu bettah look sharp, Jake. 'Member yuh don't b'long t' Tom Cobu'n now.'

"Cose I knows bett'n t' ax twicet, en so I des picks up my ole hat off'n de flo', en walks out'n de house ez p'lite ez y'u please.

"I wisht I had'n sed nuth'n 'bout no pass, 'case I knows Bill Nort'n gwine t' watch me to ketch me slipp'n off t' see Susan. But I knows wat I gwine t' do; I gwine t' play 'possum wid Bill Nort'n. So I don't say no mo' 'bout passis en I goes to bed soon ev'ry night, en stays close 't de cabin, en gits up fust break o' day, en walks peart en wu'k harder'n I been useter. But Bill Nort'n he not got 'is eyes shet. I don't know how many times dat man 'e knock at my do' 'twixt midnight en day en say:

"'Jake!'

"En atter snor'n' uh spell I says sleepy-lak:

"'Dat you, Mos Bill?'

"En den I hear 'im walkin' back to de big house. En so atter two or three weeks he think I done fuhgit 'bout gwine down to Col. Barnesis, but bless yo' soul I ain' fuhgit. I gwine t' resk my hide to see Susan. En so Sad'day night atter ev'ything git still 'bout de plantation, I teks my foot en my han' en walks fo'teen mile to see dat gal. I dun tole de udder niggahs in de qua'ter t' tell de moster, ef 'e axes fuh me on Sunday dat I gwine t' hunt bee trees. But Laws a massy, Bill Nort'n done hear dat bee tree tale so much 'e smell uh mice, en one Sunday night 'bout midnight, 'cordin ez de darkies say, dat white man 'e knock on my do', en 'e say: 'Jake, you in dar?' En da warn' no answer come back. Lawd he'p me, I wuz fo'teen mile fum dat cabin!

"Den Mr. Nort'n he knock hard—bam—bam—bam! en say, 'You Jake!'

"Den he 'gin to cuss en r'ar, en 'e wake up e'vy nig-

ger on dat blessid hill, en 'e mek' um brek in de do', en 'e see da don't nobody been sleepin' in my bed, en 'e axes de han's what Jake gone tuh. En da all 'clar da don't 'no nuth'n 'bout it, en 'e cuss um fuh lyin' black rasculs, en 'e pop 'is bull whup 'mongst um en skeer um all putty nigh to deff.

"En wen I come sneaken' up out'n de bushes nex' mawnin' 'bout light I mos' die in my briches. Fuh dar sett'n on my do' step wuz ole Bill Nort'n big ez life!"

"'Whar you ben, you d—— black rascul?' 'e roar out so loud it make me trimble.

"Bless yuh, boss, I so troubled in my min' 'bout dat time I did'n know what to say en I des up'n tole uh whoppin' big lie."

"'Mos Bill,' I say quick's I could sort o' ketch my breff. 'Mos Bill, yuh duzn't min' me gwine 'possum-huntin' duz yuh?'

"'Possum huntin'! you 'fernul scoun'le! How you hunt possums 'dout yo' dog? Reckon I duzn't know ole Tige's tied und' de house? Oh ho! I'll tan yo' hide now, sah. You ben goin' down t' ole Barnesis 'gin my 'spress orders. Dar whar you ben. Wen I git done wid you, you'll be glad to stay home ez I tole yuh. Ole Barnes ben talkin' 'bout buyin' yuh to bring you en dat gal Susan togedder. I'd see 'im in h— fust! Now you des shuck off dat shu't en gid down here fo' dis bull-whup.'

"Dat's just 'bout what Bill Nort'n tole me, boss," continued Uncle Jake, changing his position and puffing a cloud of smoke. "En it 'pear lak to me I didn't know whut to do. Ef I gib 'im my nekkid back I know 'e gwine gib me de very debbul en no 'mount uh beggin' gwine do no good. En ef I don't min' 'im right off, wen 'e do git me 'e gwine t' make it dat much wusser. But you see I ain' nuver ben whupt en my back so tender I feel'd it uh crawlin' at dat minit des lak yearth wum's yuh go fishin' wid. Some 'ow I des couldn' tek' 'at shu't off, en I stood dar trimlin' en sweat'n' lak uh hoss wot ben runnin' hard, en Bill Norton's eyes de des blaze en 'is mouf quibber lak uh mule mouf wen he beggin' fuh corn.

"'You not gwine t' gid down here?' 'e say, comin' at me wid de butt een de whip, en cuss'n ev'y step.

"I des hol' up my han's en walk back'ards, en say 'Mos Bill, ef y'u please le' me off dis time I nuver gib y'u no mo' trouble long's you lib. Mos Bill, please des liss'n one minit. I now twenty-six yeer ole, en I nuver ben whupped in all my bo'n days. Mos Bill, I not use tuh it. My back too tender. Mos Tom nuver strack me uh lick in 'is life, Mos Bill——'

"'Shet up you — black scoun'el, en gid down here dis minit,' he say, en 'e brung dat long whup down roun' my laigs whasho-w-w!

"Den I des fuhgit myse'f, en wheel roun' en runn'd hard 's I could pud down thoo de bushes wid him foller'n fas' es 'e could come. Den we had it up en down, roun' en roun' de trees, me uh baiggin', en him git'n madder, en puff'n en cuss'n, en cutt'n at me wid de whup. I ain' try'n t' git uhway fun 'im. I des tryin' to keep out'n reach en argy wid im. But dat man ain' got no reason 'tall. Nuth'n gwine do 'im but layin' dat bull-whup crost my hide. Same time I know'd good'n well I bettah go up en tek it right den. But some 'ow I des could'n mek up my min'. By dis time de sun gitt'n way up yander, en Bill Nort'n little boy, Georgie, 'bout three year ole, 'e come runnin' ober de hill, en sayin', 'Pappy, Mammy say come t' breakfus'.'

"Den Georgie he see me stannin' 'hin' uh big white oak, en 'e run'd tuh me hold'n up 'is han's en sayin', 'Take me, Jake!' En I could'n 'fuse 'im, 'case I'se in de habit uv playin' wid 'im, en I retch down en lif 'im up, en 'e say 'Pappy, Jake gwine t' cud down de muskedine tree.'

"Boss, I clar it com'd t' me den dat de Lawd done saunt dat chile to git me out'n dat scrape, en I say:

"'Mos Bill, le' me ca'y Georgie t' de big house fuh uh.' En I start 'long dat way, en my moster he didn' say nuth'n, but des follow long atter me. I put de boy ober de fence in de yard, en den I turns 'roun' en I sez:

"'Mos Bill, fuh Georgie's sake fuhgib me dis time, en I'll nuver gib yu' no mo' trouble. I promus fo' God, Mos Bill."

"He say, 'Jake, you'se dis'bey'd me. I nuver fuhgib dat to no nigger. No use t' baig. I'm gwine t' eat my breakfus'. You wait out here. I'm gwine t' tie yo' up en gib yuh 'bout fifty. Den we call it squar'.'

"En 'e went 'long in de house, en I stood dar lookin' atter him 'bout uh minit. Den I tuk t' de woods. I don't hab no breakfus' ner dinner. But I don't think 'bout dat. I cain think uhbout nuth'n but how mad Bill Nort'n gwine t' be wen he come out'n de house en fin' me gone, en cain fin' me nowhar 'bout de place. En I know'd he gwine t' bring Bob Ketchum's nigger-dogs, en dem varmints gwine chaw my meat, en Bill Nort'n gwine tan my hide fuh good. En wen I 'member all dem things I feels wusser en wusser, en I wisht t' goodness I hed pulled my shu't at de fust off start. But I didn' stop trott'n. I des kep gwine thoo de woods sort o' groanin' en talkin' t' myself. I gwine t' see Mas Tom Cobu'n. Mebbe he could he'p me. I know ef I kin fin' im he gwine try. I foots it 'bout ten mile to Mos Tom's place, en fin's uh black man wat I know wu'kin' down by de creek. I hides in de bushis 'tel he comes up t' een de row, en den I ax 'im mighty cautious 'bout Mos Tom. He says he health done gone by drinkin' en da done tuk 'im off t' de springs. Den I lef' dare en say I goes down t' ole man Barnes'is. I ain't fuhgit dem words Nort'n say 'bout Susan's moster buyin' o' me, en I hangs on t' dat lak uh drowndin' man t' uh plank."

Here Uncle Jake stopped, and tapped his pipe on a half-buried brick, and said:

"Boss, I wish yu' gib me some mo' dat plug-cut. It tases pow'ful good. Whar yu' git it?

"Well," he went on, "I git down t' de Barnes plantation 'bout sun-down en I hang uh-roun' de qua'tuz 'til I kin sen word t' Susan dat I mos' starve' t' deff, en want uh see 'er.

"'Twarnt long atter dark fo' she come slipp'n thoo de trees wid uh baskit on 'er om, en I say mos' in uh whispuh: 'Heah, I is, Susan,' en she say: "'Jake, what de mattuh wid yuh? Dis ain' Sad'day night. You done run'd uhway fum ole Bill Nort'n.' Den I

ups en tells 'er how I done got kotch up wid en all uhbout it.

"'Grashus life, Jake!' sess Susan, 'don't y' know dat white man gwine t' skin y'u libe? Wot y'u gwine t' do wid yo'sef?'

"I 'uz so busy stuff'n in taters, en chicken, en bread, en buttuh, en sich lak wot dat gal brung me, I putty much quit talkin' fuh uhwhile. But bimeby my innerds da quit da frett'n en quite down, en den I tell Susan I want t' see Col. Barnes en' ax 'im t' buy me way fum Bill Nort'n, en' she 'low 'er moster he done ben talk'n 'bout dat, but my moster 'e won't part fum me. Dat mek me mighty low-sperited, but I tells 'er I boun' t' see ole man Barnes. Den she say he not at 'ome, en' be gone 'tell de een de week, en 'fo' dat time mebbe Bill Nort'n 'e fin' me out.

"'Berry well, den,' I say, 'I cain' he'p it. I cain' go back en stan' all de cowhid'n dat man got laid up fuh me by dis time. Ef 'e git me, he nuver know w'en to stop beat'n on me, he so mad. I gwine lay 'roun' here tell Col. Barnes git home, en den I gwine see 'im ef I kin. You bring me baskit vittles ev'y night.'

"En Susan she lef' me den, en I hear 'er snuffin' en cryin' ez she went toze de big house.

"Well, I slinks 'bout in de woods, en Susan she runs out ev'y night t' fetch de baskit en bring de news, en Sad'day-night hit come, en Col. Barnes he got home en not uh blessed word fum Bill Nort'n. But I knows he gwine sarch dat plantation soon er later. En I know'd more'n dat, dat Col. Barnes he gwine hang back fum talkin' wid me. Yuh know, Boss, dem slabe laws mighty tight on pussens wot hobbers runuhways. I knows Col. Barnes don't want know nuth'n 'bout me, 'case Bill Nort'n gwine ax 'im ef 'e seed me, en den wot 'e gwine t' say? But Susan she hep me out'n de diffikilty. She say Mos Willyum (dat's Col. Barnes) he gwine to walk by hisse'f ober t' pra'r meet'n (he mighty 'ligious man), en 'e be comin' back 'bout nine uh-clock, en I kin meet 'im on de road comin' home. Den 'e cain blame hisse'f fuh talkin' t' runuhway-nigger.

"So I waylays de paff down by de spring branch. It

'uz mighty putty wo'm, moonshiny night, en de kitty-dids 'uz singin' fuh all da's wuff. En it crost my mine, it did, how happy I mout be sich uh night ez dat ef me en Susan wuz white folks. But 'bout dat time I hear de ole man comin', en I see 'is white ha'r en whiskers w'en de moon drap thoo uh hole in de tree-tops en strack um, en 'e min' me one dem ol' Bible prophits.

"Den I riz up en I say wid uh trimblin' in my thoat:

"'Mos Willyum!'

"He stop lak he s'prized, en say: 'Who dat call me?'

"'Hit's me, Mos Willyum—Jake Cobu'n.'

"'W'at you slipp'n 'bout here fuh, Jake? You done rund uhway fum Nort'n? W'at yuh mean by showin' yo'sef t' me? Don't you know hit's my duty t' tek y'u en hol' y'u fuh yo' moster?'

"'Mos Willyum, fuh de Lawd sake don't talk dat uhway. It mos' kill me. Who I gwine come tuh ef not you? I des bleeged t' run uhway.'

"En den I up en tole 'im all uhbout de trouble 'twix' me an' Mr. Nort'n, en I win's up by baiggin uv 'im t' buy me fuh hisself en sabe me out'n dat bad man's han's. I 'us so offul feared o' Bill Nort'n's cow-hide dat I des fall down on my knees dar in de woods fo' ole man Barnes, en hol' 'is han's en baig 'im not t' gib me up. En I seed de tears uh shinin' on 'is whiskuz, en hearn um drappin' on de leabes, en I know'e he gwine t' 'friend me, en it mek me cry too, en I say, 'Lawd bless yuh, Mos Willyum, wot uh good man yuh is!'

"En den 'e put 'is han's on my head, en atter uh while I hearn 'im sayin' 'Po' feller, po' feller!' en den he say: 'Jake, I mighty sorry fuh yuh, but I 'fraid I cain do y'u no good. I done offer Nort'n mo'n y'u wuff, en 'e say 'e not gwine let y'u go t' nobody. I spect, Jake, y'u got t' take some bad med'sun. Y'u go on uh way, now, en don't y'u be talkin' t' me no mo'. Case of yuh duz I'll hab to 'port y'u to Nort'n.' En den de ole man he walk on home, en lef' me dar in de woods.

"Nex' mawnin 'bout sun-up Susan she come up runnin' t' me wid 'er eyes mos' popp'n out'n er head, en sayin' dat Bill Nort'n des come t' Mos Willyum's house en she hearn 'im say he look'n fuh Bob Ketchum wid

de dogs in 'bout two hours. Den I tole 'er good-bye, en tuk de baskit en lef 'er. I didn' know whar I gwine. I didn' had no fren' t' 'peal tuh, so I des mek uh break fuh de wust swamp I knows of.

"'Long 'bout twelve uh clock I sot down by uh spring branch en et some dinnah, en while I wuz sort o' dozin' dar I hearn de dogs uh yelpin'. I listen 'bout uh minnit en den I sho' da on my trail. Den I goes wadin' down de branch en wen I comes to de creek I wades down hit. I do dat to throw de dogs off'en de trail, and gib me nudder start. I des keep uh gwine down de creek en sometimes I lan's en runs 'roun' in uh ring in de woods en den I goes on uhgin.

"Bimeby I got los' en 'bout sundown I come to uh fiel' en find myse'f et Bill Nort'n's place.

"'It warn't mor'n fo' hundred yards t' de big house, en I stops dar in de thickit en listens at the dogs dat kep uh comin' closter and closter en I didn' know what in de name o' heb'n to do wid myself. Fin'ly de leader uh de pack he come en jump at my th'oat, en I brek 'is head wid my hick'ry club. But I knows I couldn' fight all dem dogs, en I knows Bill Nort'n en Bob Ketchum not fur behin' en I left de woods en run'd up to de big house. De Mistis (dat's Bill Nort'n's wife) she in de front yard wen I run'd in, en she turn white ez uh ghos' wen I say out'n breff:

"'Mistis, cain' you baig Mos Bill to le' me off?' En she 'low she dasn't meddle wid 'er ole man's business. En 'bout dat time little Georgie he come uh runnin' t' me uh laffin en hol'n up 'is han's. Po' little feller, he don' know noth'n 'bout Jake's mis'ry.

"I grabbed de chile up, en look down de lane en bless y'u, Boss, dar wus Bob Ketchum en Bill Nort'n en de whole pack o' dogs des uh comin full tilt fuh de house. Den widout uh word I jumps ober de fence on de fur side, en de Mistis she screams out:

"'Jake! bring Georgie back!'

"But I don' pay no 'tention 'tall. I des toted dat chile off in de woods. En I could heer de mudder uh de boy tellin' Mr. Nort'n, en tekin' on dreadful. En I hearn 'im say: 'Bring me my shot-gun!'

"En 'bout de time da startin' fum de house I 'us climbin up in uh hick'ry tree wot wus all kivered roun' wid thick leabs. En whiles all dat bein' done, I don't know no mo'n uh chile unbo'n wot mek me tek dat little boy wid me. But some 'ow it 'pear t' me he gwine git me out'n dat scrape.

"De dogs da come uh runnin' stret to de tree en 'gin to bayin' loud's da could bark, en Bill Nort'n, en 'is wife, en Bob Ketchum, da all come up runnin' out'n breff too. But da couldn't see me fuh de leabs. Den Georgie's mudder, she say: 'Jake, y'u up dar?' en I say:

"'Yes'm, Mistis.'

"'Wot you done wid Georgie?'

"'I got 'im up hear, Mistis. He not hurt.'

"'You bring 'im down here dis minit!' she say.

"'Mistis, I feerd t' come down dar, dem dogs gwine eat me up, en Mos Bill putt' nigh kill me,' I 'lows.

"At dat Bill Nort'n he des biled ober. It fa'rly mek my ha'r rise up t' hear dat white man cuss en vamp uhroun. I know'd I done gone up fuh good onless de Lawd he'p me. Bill Nort'n he say he gwine to gib me uh thousun' lashes wen 'e git me, en 'e order me t' gid down out'n dat tree fo' 'e fetch me out. But I des sot right still on de lim'. Den 'e cock 'is gun en say he gwine t' shoot. Den I 'ply:

"'Mos Bill, don't shoot; you kill Georgie!' 'En den I hearn 'is wife grab de gun en tek it fum 'im. Den 'e say 'e gwine t' clamb de tree en mek me gid down ef 'e hab t' shoot me wid 'is pistul. Den 'is wife she 'gin t' scream, en baig 'im not to go up dar, but 'e des flung 'er off en start up. I seed de lim's uh shakin', en hearn de leabs uh rus'lin.' Bimeby I seed 'im pullin 'way de lim's, en peep'n up at me. He pull out 'is 'volver, en I say: 'Mos Bill, fuh God sake, don't shoot! You kill Georgie, I tell y'u!'

"By dat time 'e des uh comin' at me wile en crazy, en I holler out: 'Mos Bill, don' mek me do noth'n desprit!' But 'e don't pay no 'tention. He p'int 'is pistul at my head, en grab fuh de baby, en I fotch out my long, sharp butcher-knife, en puts it 'gin Georgie's sof', white th'oat, en I calls out one mo' time: 'Mos Bill!' en den 'e draps 'is 'volver en look lak 'e plum outdone.

"'Jake, you gwine t' kill my baby?' 'e axes me wid 'is lips kind o' trimblin. But I don't mek no 'ply t' dat. I des sot dar hold'n de knife t' Georgie's th'oat. En he not bit skeered. He des look up in my eyes ez innercent ez uh little sheep. But Lawd bless you, Boss, I ain' nuver had no notion cutt'n dat chile's meat.

"So Georgie's mudder she hearn wot Mos Bill 'e say uhbout me kill'n 'er baby, en she 'gin t' scream wusser'n ever, en' baig, en baig 'er old man t' come down, en ax'n me what I doin' t' Georgie. But I ain' say'n noth'n t' her needer.

"'Bout dat time I hearn uh hoss come gallup'n up de hill, en de hoss stop, en somebody 'gin t' talk low t' Miss Nort'n, en den somebody calls out loud 'Nort'n!'

"En den I des busses out en says 'Bless de Lawd, dar's Mos Willyum Barnes!' En my heart it des riz up in my thoat en mos' choke me. En den Bill Nort'n he 'ply back, 'Who dat call me down dar?'

"'It's me, Barnes,' Mos Willyum answer, en den 'e say, 'Nort'n, don't do noth'n resh. Come down here, I wan' talk wid y'u.'

"En Mr. Nort'n, he des grine his teef 'en cuss und' 'is breff, en go clamin' down froo de limbs, en him en Mos Willyum da talk long time t'gedder, en I cain' heer noth'n cep'n Bill Nort'n cuss'n uh me, en sw'arin he gwine t' git eb'n wid me, but Mos Willyum he kep on argyfyin', en atter while he say: 'Jake!' en I answers, 'Yes, Mos Willyum.'

"'You b'longs t' me now," he 'low. 'I done bo't you fum Mr. Nort'n. Come 'long down. You not gwine t' be hurt.'

"I 'clare, Boss, I never so happy in all my bo'n days ez I wuz dat minnit. I know ole man Barnesis word same, ez de law, en I rolls outn'n dat tree same ez uh squirr'l. En Bob Ketchum he druv 'way de dogs, en Bill Nort'n he look lak 'e could t'ar me to pieces, but I don' pay no 'tention 'tall to' dem. I des gib de baby t' his mammy, en den I draps down on bo'f knees fo' ole man Barnes, en say: 'God bless yuh, Mos Willyum, God bless yuh!'"

This story by Erckmann-Chatrian is made for metaphysicians; but even they, unless they have strong nerves, would better skip it. As Lincoln remarked, "For those who like this sort of thing this is the sort of thing they like." It is certainly a remarkable creation, and worthy to take its place among the great tales of the world. It is translated for ROMANCE by Leonard G. Myers.

THE THREE SOULS OF MAN.

I.

In 1805 I went through my sixth year in transcendental philosophy at Heidelberg. Every one knows this University life; it is an easy-going existence. You live like a lord, rise at midday, smoke your old Ulm pipe, drain one or two small glasses of schnapps and then, buttoning up your coat to the chin and placing your flat cap jauntily over your left ear, *à la Prussienne*, you go hear Hasenkopf, the celebrated professor, discuss *a priori* or *a posteriori* ideas. You are at liberty to yawn, even to fall asleep, if it suits you.

The lecture finished, you repair to the King Gambrinus and stretch out your limbs under the table; the pretty servants, with their black taffeta bodices, hasten with sausages, ham and tankards of beer. You drink, eat and sing choruses. One whistles for his dog, another seizes Charlotte or Gretchen by the waist. Occasionally a fight takes place; blows from canes rain down, glasses topple and tankards fall over. The watchman comes; he arrests you and you spend the night in the lock-up.

Thus pass the days, the months, the years!

At Heidelberg, one meets future princes, dukes and barons, and sons of cobblers, of schoolmasters and of worthy merchants. The young lords form a separate set, but all the rest mingle fraternally.

I was then thirty-two years of age and my beard was commencing to turn gray; the mug, pipe and sourcrout were declining in my esteem. I felt the need of a

change. As to Hasenkopf, by dint of hearing him expatiate upon discursive and intuitive concepts, upon apodictic truths and predicates, this had all formed a veritable hodge-podge in my head; it seemed to me to lay bare the foundation of science: *ex nihilo nihil.* Often have I exclaimed with outstretched arms: "Kasper Zâan! Kasper Zâan!—it is not well to know too much; nature has no more illusions for thee; thou canst say, in a voice of lamentation, with the prophet Jeremiah: Vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas!"

Such was my melancholy condition when, toward the end of the year 1805, a terrible event happened which taught me that I did not know everything and that a philosophical career is not always strewn with roses.

Among my old companions there was a certain Wolfgang Scharf, one of the most unyielding logicians I ever met. Imagine to yourself a short, lean man, with hollow eyes, white lashes and red hair standing straight up, his sunken cheeks hidden by a bristly beard and his broad shoulders covered with tattered garments. Seeing him glide along the walls, a loaf of bread under his arm, with eager eyes and curved back, one would have likened him to an old cat in search of its prey. Wolfgang had no thought beyond metaphysics; for five or six years back, he had lived on bread and water in the garret of an old slaughter-house. Never had a bottle of foaming beer or Rhine wine calmed his ardor for science, nor a slice of ham impaired the course of his sublime meditations. The poor devil was therefore a frightful object to behold; I say "frightful," for, notwithstanding his apparently consumptive condition, he had tremendous strength in his bony frame and the muscles of his jaws and hands stood out like bands of iron, while his sly look alienated from him the pity of his associates.

In his voluntary isolation, this strange being seemed to have preserved for me alone a remnant of sympathy; he came to see me from time to time, and gravely seated in my arm-chair, his fingers moving convulsively, he would impart to me his metaphysical lucubrations.

"Kasper," he would say in a sharp voice, proceeding in a Socratic way by interrogation, "Kasper, what is the soul?"

Quite proud of displaying my erudition before him, I would reply in a pedantic manner:

"According to Thales, it is a sort of loadstone; according to Plato, a substance which acts of its own volition; according to Asclepiades, an excitement of the senses; Anaximander says that it is a composition of earth and water; Empedocles, the blood; Hippocrates, a spirit diffused by the body; Zeno, the quintessence of the four elements; Xenocrates——"

"Certainly! Certainly! But you! what do you think of the substance of the soul?"

"I, Wolfgang? I say, with Lactantius, that I know nothing of it. I am an Epicurean by nature. Now, according to the Epicureans, all judgment comes from the senses; and as the soul is not perceived by my senses, I cannot judge of it."

"Yet consider, Kasper, that a number of creatures, such as insects and fish, live unprovided with one or several senses. Who knows if we possess them all; if some do not exist of which we have not even a conception?"

"Possibly so, but in the uncertainty I refrain from pronouncing upon it."

"Do you believe, Kasper, that one can know a thing without having learned it?"

"No; all knowledge proceeds from experience or study."

"But then, comrade, how does it happen that the young of chickens, upon coming from the egg, commence at once to run about, to take nourishment for themselves? How comes it that they discover the hawk amidst the clouds and conceal themselves under their mother's wings? Have they learned, while in the egg, to know their enemy?"

"It is a matter of instinct, Wolfgang; all animals act upon instinct."

"Then instinct, it seems, consists in knowing what one has not learned?"

"Ah!" exclaimed I, "you ask too much of me; what reply can I make to you?"

He smiled with a disdainful air, threw the flaps of his tattered cloak over his shoulder, and marched out without saying a word.

I looked upon him as a lunatic, but one of the most harmless sort. Who could have imagined that a craze for metaphysics would be dangerous?

About this time an old cake-seller, Catherine Wogel by name, suddenly disappeared. This simple soul, her tray suspended from her long neck by a pink ribbon, was accustomed to call at the King Gambrinus at about eleven o'clock daily. The students usually joked with her, reminding her of some youthful pranks, of which she had made no mystery, and at which she would split her sides with laughter.

"Oh, Lord! yes. I have not always been old and have indeed had some fine times in my life! And now do I repent? Ah! if it were only possible to commence over again!"

She uttered a sigh, and every one laughed.

On the third day her disappearance was talked about.

"What the devil has become of Catherine? Can she be sick? It is strange, for she appeared so full of life the last time she was here."

It was understood that the police were in search of her. As for me, I did not doubt but that the poor old woman, a trifle overcome by *kirschwasser*, had stumbled into the river in the night.

The next day, after leaving the lecture-room, I met Wolfgang, walking along the pavements of the Münster. As soon as he caught sight of me he came toward me with glistening eyes and said:

"I am looking for you, Kasper,—I am looking for you. The hour of triumph has come. You must follow me."

His look, gestures and pallor showed an extreme excitement; and as he seized me by the arm, dragging me with him toward the tanners' quarter, I could not overcome an indefinable feeling of fear, although I had not the courage to resist him.

The narrow street which we followed at a quick pace

ran from the Münster to a block of buildings as old as Heidelberg itself. The square roofs; the wooden balconies where the people's washings fluttered; the outer stairways with their worm-eaten railings; the numbers of persons in rags, emaciated, curious and with open mouths, who leaned from their windows and looked with a stupid air at the strangers who plunged into their sewer; the long poles, running from roof to roof, burdened with bloody skins; the thick smoke which escaped from the chimneys at every story, all passed before my eyes, like a vision of the Middle Ages, and, though the sky was bright and beautiful, its azure angles, cut out by the gables, and its light, falling here and there upon crumbling walls, added to my emotion by the strangeness of the contrast.

There are times when men lose their presence of mind. I had not even a thought of asking Wolfgang where we were going.

From the populous quarter where misery swarms, we came to the deserted cross-street of the old slaughter-house. Suddenly Wolfgang, whose dry, cold hand seemed riveted to my wrist, led me into a house falling into ruin and with broken windows, situated between the hay-loft of the *Landwehr*, long since disused, and the stalls of the abattoir.

"Go ahead," he said.

I went along a wall of dried earth, at the end of which there was a winding stairway with broken steps. We ascended over the rubbish gathered there, and though my companion continually called out to me in an impatient tone, "Higher! Higher!" I stopped now and then, seized with fear, under pretext of getting my breath or examining the recesses of the gloomy building, but in reality to deliberate whether it were not better to go back.

At last we came to the foot of a perpendicular ladder, the top of which was hidden in the darkness of a loft. I still ask myself why I was imprudent enough to climb that ladder without demanding the least explanation from my friend. It seemed as if his madness were contagious.

I climbed up—he behind me. I came to the top. I stepped upon the dusty floor. I looked around. It was an immense loft, the roof pierced by three dormer-windows, the gray walls of the gable reaching the rafters on the left, a small table, crowded with books and papers, in the centre,—the beams crossing each other above our heads in the darkness. The windows were ten or twelve feet from the floor and it was impossible to look out. I did not, at first, notice a low door and a large breathing-hole, breast-high, arranged in the gable-end.

Wolfgang, without a word, pushed a chest, which served him as a chair, toward me, and taking a pitcher of water in both his hands, drank deeply, while I looked musingly at him.

"We are in the roof of the old *abattoir*," said he with a strange smile, putting his pitcher on the floor. "I have lived here for five years without paying rent, and not a soul has come to disturb my studies."

Seating himself on several logs heaped up in a corner, he continued: "Now, let us come to the point. Are you sure, Kasper, that you have a soul?"

"Listen, Wolfgang," I replied in quite a bad humor, "if you have led me here to speak of metaphysics, you have done wrong. I had just left Hasenkopf's lecture and was repairing to the King Gambrinus for breakfast, when you intercepted me on the way. I take my dose of the abstract each day. That suffices for me. Now explain yourself clearly, or permit me to continue my way to the restaurant."

"You live only to eat then?" asked he in a hoarse voice. "Do you know that I have gone for days without food, through my love of science?"

"Each one to his taste; you live on syllogisms and inconclusive reasonings. I like sausages and strong beer. What would you? It is too much for me."

He became quite pale and his lips trembled; controlling his anger, he said:

"Kasper, since you will not reply to me, at least listen to my explanation. Man stands in need of admiration, and I want you to admire me. I want to

astound you by the sublime discovery I have just made. It is not too much to ask an hour's attention after ten years of conscientious study."

"Be it so; let us proceed. I am listening, but make haste."

His countenance again moved startlingly and caused me to reflect in fear; I repented of having climbed the ladder and I assumed a serious air, in order not to irritate the madman more. My meditative appearance seemed to calm him a little, for after some moments of silence he said:

"You are hungry. Here is my bread. Here is the pitcher. Eat, drink, but listen."

"It is unnecessary, Wolfgang; I shall listen to you without that."

He smiled bitterly and continued:

"Not only has each man one soul, a fact admitted from the beginning of historic time—from a plant to a man, all beings live. They are animate,—therefore they have a soul. Are six years of study with Hasenkopf necessary for me to make answer that every organized being has at least one soul? But the more perfect man's organization becomes, the more complicated it is and the more the souls multiply. It is that which distinguishes animate beings one from another. The plant has only one soul, the vegetal; its function is simple and unique. Its object is nutrition by the air, through the leaves, and by the earth, through the roots. The lower animal has two souls: first, the vegetal soul, whose functions are the same as in the plant—nutrition by the lungs and intestines, which are truly vegetal; and the animal soul, the seat of sensibility, whose organ is the heart. Finally, man, who sums up terrestrial creation, has three souls: the vegetal and animal, whose functions are employed as in the brute; and the human soul, whose object is reason, intelligence. Its organ is the brain. The more closely the animal approaches man in the perfection of his cerebral organization, the more he possesses this third soul. Such are the dog, the horse, the elephant; but the man of genius alone possesses it in its full power."

Here Wolfgang stopped for a few minutes and, fixing his look full upon me, said:

"Well, what have you to reply?"

"Oh, it is like any other theory; the proof only is wanting."

A sort of frantic exaltation seized him at this reply; he rose with a leap, his hands in the air, and cried out:

"Yes, yes, the proof was wanting. That is what vexed my soul for ten years. That was the cause of so many vigils, of mental sufferings, of privations! For it was upon myself, Kasper, on myself alone, that I at first wished to experiment. Fasting forced more and more upon my mind this sublime conviction, while still it was impossible for me to establish the proof. But at last it is found. I hold it. You are about to hear the three souls manifest, proclaim themselves. You shall hear them!"

After this outburst of enthusiasm, which, announced with so much energy and fanaticism, caused me to shiver, he suddenly became cool, and sitting down, with his elbows on the table, he went on, while pointing out the high gable-wall:

"The proof is there,—behind that wall. I shall show it to you immediately, but first it is necessary for you to follow the progressive march of my ideas. You know the opinion of the ancients upon the nature of souls; they admitted four of them, united in man: *caro*, the flesh, a mixture of earth and water which death dissolved; *manes*, the phantom which lingered around the tomb; *umbra*, the shade, more immaterial than the *manes*, —it disappeared after having visited the relatives; finally, *spiritus*, the spirit, the immaterial substance, which rises to the gods. This classification seemed to me correct; the point was to analyze a human being, in order to establish the distinct existence of the three souls. Reason told me that each man, before attaining to his final development, must have passed through the condition of a plant or animal; in other words, that Pythagoras had foreseen the truth, without being able to furnish the demonstration. Well! I wished to solve this problem. It was necessary to extinguish in myself the three

souls successively and then to reanimate them. I had recourse to a severe fast. Unfortunately, the human soul, in order to permit the animal soul to act freely, must succumb first. Hunger caused me to lose the power of observing myself in the animal state; in exhausting myself, I placed myself beyond a condition of judging. After a number of fruitless attempts upon my own organism, I was convinced there was only one means of attaining the end; it was to practise upon another. But who would be willing to lend himself to this kind of study?"

Wolfgang paused, his lips contracted and in a harsh tone he added:

"A subject was necessary at any price. I resolved to experiment *in anima vili*."

At this I trembled. This man then was capable of anything!

"Did you understand?" asked he.

"Very well. A victim was necessary to you——"

"To make an analysis of," he added coolly.

"And you have found one?"

"Yes, I promised you to let you perceive the three souls. That will perhaps be difficult now; but yesterday you would have heard them, by turns, howl, roar, supplicate and gnash the teeth."

A cold shiver spread over my face; Wolfgang, impassive, lighted a small lamp which he was wont to use in his study, and approaching the breathing-hole at the left, he said, while stretching his arm into the darkness: "Look, come near and look—and then listen!"

Notwithstanding the most awful presentiments, notwithstanding the internal shiver which agitated me, attracted by the mystery, I leaned into the dark opening. Then, under the lamp's pale rays, at about fifteen feet below the floor, a gloomy room was disclosed, without another entrance than through the loft. I perceived that it was one of those holes where butchers heap up the skins from the *abattoir*, to let them stand awhile before delivering them to the tanners. It seemed empty, and for a few seconds I saw this pit filled with shadows.

"Look closely," said Wolfgang, in a low voice. "Do

you not see a bundle of clothes in a heap in the corner? It is old Catherine Wogél, the cake-seller, who——"

He had not time to finish, for a piercing cry, like the mournful mawling of a cat, was heard in the pit. A wild being jumped forward and seemed to wish to clamber up with its nails against the wall. More dead than alive, my forehead covered with a cold sweat, I threw myself back, crying out: "Oh! this is horrible!"

"Did you hear?" said Wolfgang, his face lighted up with a fiendish joy. "Is not that the cry of a cat? Ha, ha! This old woman, before reaching the human state, was either a cat or a panther. Now, the beast wakens. Oh, hunger—hunger—and, above all, thirst—perform prodigies."

He did not look at me; he was glorifying himself; an abominable satisfaction shone forth in his countenance, his attitude, his smile.

The cries of the poor old woman had ceased. The lunatic, having placed his lamp on the table, added as a commentary: "She has now fasted four days. I allured her here under the pretext of selling her a small cask of *kirschwasser*. I made her descend into the pit and closed it up. Drunkenness has caused her ruin. She is expiating her immoderate thirst. The first two days the human soul existed in all its strength. She supplicated, she implored me; she proclaimed her innocence, saying that she had done nothing, that I had no right over her. Then rage took possession of her—she overwhelmed me with reproaches, called me monster, scoundrel. The third day, which was yesterday, the human soul disappeared completely. The cat showed its claws. It was hungry—its teeth became long—it commenced to mawl, to howl. Fortunately we are in a by-place. Last night the people in the tanners' quarter must have supposed an actual war of cats was going on; the cries were such as to strike one with terror!"

"Now, do you know what will follow, when the beast is exhausted, Kasper? The vegetal soul will take its turn; that is the one which perishes last. You see, Kasper, that the proof of the three souls is complete."

These words broke upon my ear like the delirious ravings of the most horrible nightmare. Catherine Wogel's cry had pierced to the marrow of my bones. I was no longer myself. I lost my head. Suddenly awaking from this moral stupor, my indignation overcame me; I rose. I seized the maniac by the throat and dragged him toward the opening.

"Scoundrel!" I said to him, "who gave you a right to lay your hand upon a being like yourself, upon a creature of God, to satisfy your infamous curiosity! I shall myself deliver you up to justice."

He was so surprised at my aggressiveness, his act seemed to him so proper, that at first he made no resistance and permitted me to drag him to the ladder without replying to me; but there, turning with the suppleness of a wild beast, he in turn seized me by the throat, his eyes glittering and his lips foaming. His hand, as strong as a steel-spring, raised me from the floor and nailed me against the wall, while with the other hand he opened the bolt of the closet. Perceiving his intention, I made a terrible effort to free myself. I propped myself in the doorway; but this man was gifted with a superhuman strength. After a short and desperate struggle, I was lifted up for the second time and thrown into the pit, while above me rang out these strange words: "Thus perishes the rebellious flesh, thus triumphs the immortal soul."

And, bruised and shaken, I had scarcely struck the bottom of the hole, when the heavy door fifteen feet above me was closed again, shutting off the gray light of the loft from my eyes.

II.

My fright was so great at being thrown into the place and feeling myself caught like a rat in a trap, that I got up without uttering a complaint.

"Kasper," I said to myself, leaning back against the wall with a strange calmness, "you must now perish here with the old woman. To hope to get out of this hole is time lost. Wolfgang holds you in his clutches. He will not let you go; the walls are of stone and the

flooring of thick oak planks. No one saw you cross the tanners' quarter; no one knows you in the old Butcheries; no one will have an idea of seeking you here. It is over, Kasper, it is over!"

This all passed through my mind like lightning; at this moment Wolfgang's pale face appeared at the small opening with his little lamp and when, my hands clasped in terror, I was about to supplicate him, I found that I stammered horribly; not a word came from my trembling lips. He, seeing me thus, commenced to smile, and in the silence of the place I heard him murmur: "The coward! he is beseeching me!" This finished me; I fell, face forward, to the floor and I should have swooned, if the fear of being attacked by the old woman had not brought me to myself. Nevertheless, she did not yet move. Her strength was almost gone. Beyond a few groans and feeble struggles, she made little movement until she died some time during the next day. Wolfgang's head had disappeared. I heard him cross the loft, move the table and give a loud dry cough. My hearing was so acute that the slightest sound reached me and caused me to shudder. Presently I heard Wolfgang go down the ladder and I counted his steps, one by one, until the noise was lost in the distance. Where had the wretch gone? I could not divine, but during the whole of this day and night he did not put in an appearance. He did not return until the next day at about eight o'clock in the evening.

I had not closed my eyes. I no longer felt fear or anger. I was hungry—ravenously so—and I knew that the hunger would continue to increase.

Yet scarcely had a faint noise been made in the loft, when I stopped and raised my eyes. The vent-hole became bright. Wolfgang had lighted his lamp. He was doubtless about to come to look at me. In this hope I prepared a touching prayer, but the lamp was extinguished—no one came!

This was perhaps the most frightful moment of my torment. I said to myself that Wolfgang, knowing that I was not yet exhausted, did not deign even to glance at me—that in his eyes I was only an interesting sub-

ject, who would not be fit for science until two or three days had passed by—between life and death. I seemed to feel my hair slowly whiten on my head. Finally, my terror became so great that I lost consciousness.

I was partially aroused from this condition by a dim light in the darkness. I raised my eyes. Wolfgang's pale face was thrust through the hole. He was not laughing; he seemed to exhibit neither joy, satisfaction nor remorse; he watched me!

And how that figure filled me with fear! If he had laughed, if he had enjoyed his vengeance, I might have hoped to move him—but he only watched!

We remained with our eyes fixed on each other—I, smitten with fear; he, cold, calm and observant, as before a lifeless object. The insect pierced by a needle, which one sees in a microscope, if it thinks, if it understands the eye of man, must have similar fancies.

It was necessary that I should die in order to satisfy a monster's curiosity. I understood that prayer would be useless and I said nothing. I merely closed my eyes in despair.

When I opened them the lamp had been removed.

"Wolfgang," I cried out, "God is above us! God sees us! Wolfgang! Woe to such monsters!"

The rest of the night passed away in fear.

After having dreamed anew, in the delirium of fever, of the chances left for escape, and discovered none, I suddenly made up my mind to die, and this resolution brought me a few calm moments. I turned over in my mind Hasenkopf's arguments relative to the immortality of the soul, and for the first time I found an invincible force in them.

"Yes," cried I to myself, "the journey through this world is only a time of trial; injustice, cupidity and the most baleful passions dominate the heart of man. The weak are crushed by the strong, the poor by the rich. On earth honesty is a name only, but everything will be right after death. God sees the injustice of which I am a victim and will take into account the sufferings I am enduring. He will pardon my immoderate appetites, my excessive love of good cheer. Before taking

me to his bosom he has wished to purify me by a severe fast. I make an offering of my sufferings to the Lord."

Yet, I must confess, my dear friends, notwithstanding my deep contrition, regret for the tavern, for my jolly comrades, for that happy existence which slipped by amid songs and good wine, made me utter many sighs. I heard the crackling of the frying-pan, the gurgling of the bottles, the click of the glasses, and my stomach groaned as if it were alive; it formed, in a way, a being, separate from my being, and protested against the philosophical arguments of Hasenkopf.

The worst of my sufferings was my thirst—it was so unendurable that I licked the saltpetre of the walls to refresh myself.

When the day appeared at the dormer-window, wan and indistinct, I suddenly had a fit of ungovernable rage.

"The wretch is there," I said. "He has bread, and a jug of water—he is drinking."

Then I pictured him raising the large jug to his lips. I seemed to see a stream of water passing slowly down his throat. It was a delicious stream, which was flowing—flowing without end.

"Wolfgang," I cried, "listen. Permit me to drink only a mouthful from your jug, and I will allow you to let me die of hunger and will not reproach you for it! I find your system quite excellent. I admire you. Let me take only a gulp of water. No one has ever had so sublime a conception as yours; it is certain that the three souls exist. Yes, I wish to proclaim it. I will be your firmest adherent. Will you not let me take a single drop of water?"

Without reply, he withdrew.

My exasperation then knew no bounds. I hurled myself against the wall as if I would break my limbs. I called upon the wretch in the most awful terms I knew. Red flames seemed to pass before my eyes; strength abandoned me and I fell in a swoon.

How long this unconscious condition lasted I do not know, but I was brought to by a strange circumstance, the recollection of which will always remain stamped

upon my mind; I was aroused by the plaintive howling of a dog—a howling so weak, so pitiable, so poignant, that it was more touching than the groans even of men which one cannot hear without suffering. I raised myself up, my face bathed with tears, not knowing whence came these groans, in such accord with my own suffering; I listened attentively, and judge of my amazement, when I found that it was I myself who groaned thus unwittingly.

From that moment all recollection is effaced from my memory. It is certain that I remained two days more in the hole, under the eye of the maniac, whose enthusiasm in seeing the triumph of his theory was fortunately such that he did not hesitate to summon several of our philosophers to enjoy its wonder.

Six weeks later, I awoke to consciousness in my own little chamber, surrounded by my friends, who congratulated me upon having escaped alive from this lesson in transcendental philosophy.

It was a sad moment when one of my comrades brought me the mirror. Then seeing myself white-headed, and thinner than Lazarus when he came from his tomb, I could not keep from shedding tears.

Poor Catherine Wogel had delivered up her soul. As for me, I was near having chronic gastritis for the rest of my days; but thanks to my good constitution, thanks, above all, to good care, I have recovered my former excellent health.

It only remains to add that justice laid its hands upon that miserable Wolfgang; but, instead of hanging him, according to his deserts, after proceedings of six months' duration, it was decided that this wretch belonged to the category of mystical lunatics, the most dangerous of all. Consequently, they confined him in a cell of the Klingenmünster, at which asylum visitors can still hear him, in a quick, sharp tone, discourse upon the three souls of man.

He accuses humanity of ingratitude, and claims that statues should be erected to him for his magnificent discovery.

ROMANCE.

Vol. XIII. MARCH, 1894. No. 2.

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An enlightening as well as amusing story is this, which has been written for ROMANCE by Elizabeth W. Champney. She affirms that, singular as it may seem, the tale is largely true, and that it is the most improbable portions which are facts.

HIS SPIRIT-BRIDE.

"MR. MULHONEY, *will* you be good enough to tell me who is making all this fracas? One would think this was an insane asylum, instead of a studio-building."

"It's right you are, Miss Helen," the janitor replied, "and it's clear gone crazy I am with the ondacent riot. It's worse than a wake or the most illegant foight I ever saw at a Tipperary fair. Do yees mind that?" he asked, as screams of ghoulish laughter echoed through the long halls. Miss Helen started. She fancied that she recognized the high treble of those childish voices, but whose was that manly bass accompanying it, and what that alarming rushing, bumping noise, as of a cyclone or an avalanche?

"What, who is it?" she cried in real alarm. "Is it Mignon and John Angelo? And what is happening?"

"It *is* thim divils," Mr. Mulhoney replied calmly, "and what they're doin', the saints above, they knows, —I don't, for whin I steps up to inquoire, Mr. Lowrie says, says he, 'Let the children enjoy themselves, Mr. Mulhoney. Ye'll not be grudgin' the innocent young things their pleasure.' 'It's not I would hinder their enjoyment,' says I. 'They moight raise the roof for all me, but as janitor of this building if I hears such a rumpus as that and don't stop it, I'll lose my sitivation.' 'Thin take this fifty-cint piece,' says he, 'and buy cotton to stuff in your ears so you can't hear it.' 'I will, sorr,' says I, 'or whiskey, which has that same quietin' effect on the nerves,' says I, 'and thim divils can kape up their bedivilment.'"

"But it is a shame in Mr. Lowrie to encourage them in their pranks," Helen replied, "and to allow them to

disturb the other artists." She stepped toward the staircase with indignation written on her usually gentle features, but her expression of stern disapproval relaxed at the spectacle which met her eyes. Mr. Lionel Lowrie was seated on a long Tunisian rug, and the two children of the studio-building had grasped the end in front of him, and were rushing at headlong speed down the staircase, giving him a novel toboggan slide. The impetus of the rug when once set in motion was such that it overtook the running children, bowled them over, and artist, children and rug landed on the floor in inextricable confusion.

"Are you killed?" Helen cried, snatching up first the little minx Mignon and next the cherubic John Angelo.

"You bet we ain't," the latter replied, shaking his blond curls. "But, oh, Aunt Helen, it's such jolly fun! Do have a slide."

Mr. Lowrie rose and bowed with some embarrassment. "Pardon me, Miss Hamilton. You find me, like King Solomon in the Arabic legends, taking an excursion on my flying carpet."

"Really, Mr. Lowrie, the children are naughty enough without any assistance, and I fear their mother will be very much vexed," and Helen led the little culprits ignominiously into their apartment.

Mr. Lowrie picked up his rug and retreated into his studio with a crestfallen air.

"Hard lines," he grumbled, "when I was only making myself agreeable to those young ones in order to gain their influence with her. Now I wonder whether she will ever sit for me for my Academy picture."

He sat down and regarded ruefully the sketch which he had made for this masterpiece,—a young girl robed in white, standing in the silvery radiance of a beam of light. It was so that he had first seen her. The prosaic facts were that he had been out late at his club, and found that he had forgotten his night-key. To his frantic pulls at the bell, Mr. Mulhoney paid no attention, for the janitor had also his club, and was out later still. But Helen, awakened by the reiterated peals, peeped from her window, and recognizing their neigh-

bor standing forlornly before the closed door, comprehended the situation, slipped on a wrapper, and stealing down to the front hall, unfastened the door. Then she ran lightly up the staircase and disappeared, but not before he saw her standing on the landing and looking back to be sure that he was safely in. The beam fell from a single electric light which burned all night in the hall, but Lowrie had idealized the effect which he saw, and called his picture "The Angel of the Morning Star."

Their acquaintance had not progressed so rapidly as he wished, for Helen did not spend all her time in the studio-building, and only visited her artistic sister at uncertain intervals. The sister, too, though she received Mr. Lowrie cordially when he called, was too busy a woman to return his visits. Consequently his only means of communication with Miss Hamilton had been her niece and nephew—the elfish Mignon, with her gypsy eyes and hair, her world-wise manner, and her embarrassing questions; and the heavenly boy John Angelo, whose name exactly tallied with his soulful blue eyes and his floating blond curls, and whose capacity for tricks and mischief entirely belied his angelic appearance. The children visited him daily. Mignon sat primly on his divan and catechised him with the longest words in her very unusual vocabulary. John Angelo roamed about the studio at perfect ease, climbing to his highest shelves and diving into recesses behind screens and curtains. As there was no subject too sacred for Mignon, so there was no object with which John Angelo did not desire to familiarize him.

"Mr. Lowrie," Mignon had inquired that afternoon, "don't you consider my Aunt Helen a very fascinating type of woman?"

"Very," the artist replied abstractedly, "but, John Angelo, you must not take that skeleton to pieces. You can never joint the bones together again."

"I don't think skeletons artistic," Mignon remarked. "Why do you have one in your studio, Mr. Lowrie? Do you think it improving to paint them?"

"Very. It does an artist good to get down to the

bones of things. You see, Mignon, he can paint costumed portraits better if he knows the muscles beneath the clothes and the bones beneath the muscles."

"Yes, but I should think it would be more interesting to paint bones with meat on them. I mean real nice fat, pink-and-white meat, like my Aunt Helen's. I always want to bite her. Don't you feel so, Mr. Lowrie? But I don't believe I would like her in her bones. Would you?"

"Mr. Lowrie," John Angelo called, "the stuffing is all coming out of this owl. He isn't much good anyway. Say, may I have his eyes for marbles?"

"John Angelo," the artist replied with severity, "don't handle the Venetian glass in that carved cabinet. You may break it."

"I have broken one of them,—that little slim-stemmed thing. It was awfully rotten, and I've cut my finger, too, and it's bleeding like a fireman's hose. Say, can't you step a little lively and get a fellow a rag?"

Mr. Lowrie rushed from one side of the room to the other, but John Angelo had appropriated a Holland peasant-cap, and, having torn off the lace frill, was coolly staunching the blood therewith.

"Oh! dreadful, dreadful!" exclaimed the distracted artist.

"Does the sight of blood make you faint?" Mignon asked. "Aunt Helen says she can't bear a man whom it affects that way. I shouldn't think a big man like you ought to mind a little thing like that."

"*I* don't mind it," John Angelo replied sturdily. "That is, I won't mind it, if Mr. Lowrie will give me some of his pastels. The light-colored ones make bully pictures on blackboards."

"How do you know?" Mr. Lowrie asked.

"'Cause I've just made one on the back of your coat."

"It seems to me, Mr. Lowrie," Mignon remarked meditatively, "that 'your manners have not that repose which marks the caste of Vere de Vere.'"

"Certainly not, when you two children are in my studio. But where did you get hold of that expression?"

"Aunt Helen said that was the kind of a man whom

she could adore. Would you like to have my Aunt Helen adore you?"

"Of course not,—I mean, yes, certainly. John Angelo, come out of my photographic dark-room, and tell me what you have been doing in there."

The boy emerged, spitting and sputtering. "I only tasted something (spit, sput) which looked pretty, but (spit, sput) it was awful nasty. What do you keep such stuff for, anyhow?"

Mr. Lowrie gazed at the label on the bottle, and then turned John Angelo upside down and shook him violently. "Do you think it is all out of you now? Do you feel any bad effects?" he inquired anxiously. "Just lie down on that divan while I run for the doctor. My dear, dear boy, I shall never forgive myself if anything happens!" And Mr. Lowrie dashed frantically out of the house.

He returned to find the children gone, and his studio door wide open. An Italian image-vendor had profited by the opportunity to carry off some of his most valuable effects, but he had not time just then to inquire into the extent of his losses, for the doctor, whom he had brought with him, was inquiring for his patient, and howls of anguish were issuing from the apartment occupied by his young friends.

Feeling himself guilty, Mr. Lowrie tapped, but it was some time before John Angelo's mother opened the door. The boy's voice was heard somewhere in the interior protesting, "I tell you I've only eaten half the lobster, and one pot of jam, and the fruit cake, and the cheese and the raisins, and I'm awful hungry and I want some money to buy some peanuts."

"Excuse me," the artist stammered, "but I feared John Angelo was not quite well, and as my friend Dr. Dearborn happened to drop in, I thought I would call with him."

John Angelo evidently considered the attention unnecessary and the two gentlemen retired.

All this and much more Lionel Lowrie had borne, and was willing to bear, for the sake of Helen Hamilton, but it was all in vain; she would never care deeply

for him. It was true that in the course of time, at his urgent request, she did give him a sitting for "The Angel of the Morning Star," and she also expressed herself as perfectly willing that he should sell it; but the painting was rejected at the Academy, and her faith in his ability dwindled perceptibly. It did not seem probable that he would ever have an opportunity to dispose of it, and the canvas remained with its face turned toward the wall, a monument to disappointed hopes.

"If I could only afford to go to Paris and study a year longer!" he said to himself dejectedly, for he realized his shortcomings. But this hope seemed as vain as the others which he had cherished, for poverty was beginning to stare the struggling artist in the face.

He had sold no pictures this winter, and in portraiture had had but one patron, whose name he did not know, but whom he designated in his thoughts as the Mysterious Lady. He was not quite sure that she was a lady, in every sense of the word, but she was certainly mysterious.

She had brought to him photographs from time to time, and had given him commissions to paint portraits from them. She was always in a hurry to have the work finished, but while she gave him little time in which to complete each portrait—generally but one or two days—she was never fastidious as to the quality of the work. Lowrie felt that it was demoralizing to his art to make these hasty pot-boilers, but as they were not signed, there was no danger of their injuring his reputation as an artist.

She paid very little, only twenty-five dollars per head, but a little was very welcome just now, and as she ordered these portraits almost by wholesale, and always paid promptly on their completion, he would have been sorry to have had her discontinue her patronage. I have said that he had no clew as to her identity; even her residence was a mystery, for she left no address to which he could send the paintings, but called for them personally and took them away in her carriage. Lowrie could not help speculating in reference to her, though he told himself that it was no business of his.

He had come to the conclusion that she was a would-be portrait-painter, whose pretensions and aspirations in art were by no means justified by her ability; that she had probably shown work as her own which had been touched up by a more skilful hand, and had received orders which she was not able to execute. He wondered how she had obtained so many and of just such a class, for the photographs which she brought were for the most part of an antiquated character, and of people from a very ordinary rank in life. Frequently they had been taken after death, and into these ghastly relics he was expected to infuse a life-like expression. When a costume was indicated, she preferred that it should be white, and she had a special fondness for clouds as backgrounds.

So matters went on until one day the Mysterious Lady called in great excitement. "Have you no ideal heads, Mr. Lowrie?" she asked; "nothing already on hand? I must have one immediately. There is no time to wait to have it painted to order. I want a blonde, with a rapt, inspired expression—a saint, an angel."

The artist turned the picture of "The Angel of the Morning Star."

"The very thing. Name your price."

"But I am a little particular as to who owns this picture. It was painted from a friend of mine."

"It is to go into the private collection of a gentleman in California."

"Excuse me a moment, and I will ask her permission."

Lionel Lowrie tapped at his neighbor's studio door and was met by Helen Hamilton herself. He stated the case, and she replied kindly:

"Sell it, by all means. I am only too happy to contribute to your good fortune in any way."

"If that is true, I will never sell it, for you have the power to make me the most fortunate man in the world, by becoming my wife."

Helen tapped her foot impatiently. "Mr. Lowrie, why do you compel me to say again that that never can

be? I have tried to make myself understood. You have certainly brought this upon yourself."

"And you can never change?"

"Never."

"Then I shall destroy the portrait, for it is only a source of most poignant anguish to me."

"Mr. Lowrie, I insist that you sell it. You told me, when I posed for you, that you would divide whatever sum you received from it with me—as you considered the picture half mine. Now I insist on selling my half. You have no right to destroy it, and under the circumstances I prefer that any one else should possess it."

"As you wish," and he left her brusquely.

"Well," said the Mysterious Lady. "You have taken enough time to ask a very simple question. Am I to have the picture?"

"What do you offer me for it?"

"One hundred dollars."

"Absurd. The frame cost seventy-five. I intended to ask a thousand for it, at the Academy Exhibition."

"But this is not the Academy, and I do not want the frame—I will give you one hundred and fifty, not a cent more."

"Take it. I am glad to be rid of it on any terms."

"In that case, you ought perhaps to pay me for disembarrassing you of it." But the lady smiled in a triumphant way, and paid him the money, not in a check nor in bank-notes, but in gold coins.

"I have another order for you," she added. "I want you to paint me a white castle, all towers and pinnacles. Make it appear to be on a height, with clouds billowing all around it. Be sure to have it ready by to-morrow afternoon. This canvas is too large to go in my carriage. I will send an express-man for it. Good-afternoon."

Lionel Lowrie was in a savage mood. The passionate fires which burned within him could be cooled only by intense work, and he began the new order, painting, as the French say, *comme un enragé*. He paid no heed to John Angelo and Mignon clamoring to be admitted, and by evening the picture of the white castle was

blocked in. It was finished at the appointed time, and then Lionel Lowrie succumbed to disappointment and exhaustion, and for several days was really ill.

Mignon and John Angelo were the first callers whom he allowed to enter. He felt less friendless while listening to the mites' prattle. He sat in his reclining-chair, and Mignon perched herself demurely on the model-stand and theorized as to the cause of his illness.

"You look very badly indeed, Mr. Lowrie," she said. "I think it must be because little Mignon and John Angelo have not been here to make all things pleasant."

"Perhaps so," the artist assented. "It does me good to hear you talk, child,—at all events."

"Agreeable conversation is—is—well, agreeable," Mignon remarked, "and a great deal nicer than nasty medicine. John Angelo is rummaging in your closet. Do you mind?"

"No. I don't care what happens."

"That's right. I wouldn't if I were you." She said this soothingly, with an apprehensive glance at her brother, who had found a large paper bag containing flour, but so completely riddled by the teeth of mice, that as he carried it to the open window, his course was marked upon the studio floor by a wavy line of white. Mr. Lowrie sat with his back toward the window, which was partly open, and John Angelo, on mischief intent, leaned far out and looked down upon the street.

A gentleman, wearing a shiny silk hat, was approaching. John Angelo waited until he was exactly below, and then dropped the bag of flour. The drop was calculated with such nicety that the projectile knocked the high hat into the gutter, and the bag exploded on the head of the gentleman, deluging him with flour, the greater part of which poured down the back of his neck. John Angelo continued to look down with high glee, while various passers-by, including a policeman, attempted to dust the unfortunate individual. The more they slapped and pounded him, the more the flour issued in a cloud from his collar, and poured in streams from

his sleeves. John Angelo chuckled, and made frantic signals to his sister to look from the window.

"It seems to me, Mr. Lowrie," said Mignon, "that you are sitting in a draught, and draughts are very bad for measles, and your disease may be measles, you know. I think I would better close the window."

She joined her brother with great dignity, and two little heads appeared above the window-ledge. The stamping, infuriated victim, chancing to look upward, caught sight of them, and bounded to the studio, bent upon vengeance. Both children noticed the movement and left the studio with precipitation. It was characteristic of the two that, while John Angelo rushed to the loft, let the water out of the tank, and secreted himself therein, wetting his feet and taking a cold thereby, Mignon composedly entered her own apartment and began to discourse on the sad case of Mr. Lowrie, whom she reported as at death's door.

Meantime the irate gentleman who had been so shamefully misused burst into Mr. Lowrie's studio and inveighed against him for the treatment which he had received, threatening to prosecute him to the full extent of the law, while the artist vainly protested and apologized.

Helen Hamilton's heart smote her for her unkindness to her rejected lover. It was true she could not change her decision, but that was no reason why he should suffer, neglected by every one. Mignon represented that he had had no food for three days, and that he was dying. Helen Hamilton hastily heated some beef tea, and knocked at the studio-door. The altercation within alarmed her and she would have retreated, but Lionel Lowrie flung open the door. The effect of her appearance on the angry intruder was marvellous. He gazed at her, struck dumb with astonishment—one might almost have said, with awe—and uttering no word until she had completed her gentle ministration and had left the studio.

Then his attitude completely changed. He begged Mr. Lowrie's pardon most humbly, and asked the name of his visitor.

"That," said the artist, "is the aunt of the little rascals who are responsible for your present predicament."

The gentleman seemed to have forgotten his late cause for wrath. "But she is the exact realization of my spirit-bride," he murmured. "Is she real flesh and blood, or only an apparition?"

"Her niece informs me that she is all she seems," Lowrie replied bitterly.

His visitor sat down in a dazed way. "But where could Raphael have seen her, if not in Heaven?"

"My dear sir, you will excuse me, but your remarks seem to me a trifle incoherent."

"Of course they do," the stranger replied, pulling himself together. "Allow me to explain. In the first place, there is my card,—Henry Atterbury, San José, California. I am a plain, practical man, not in the least superstitious, but a few months since I had the misfortune to lose my mother. It is this event which has brought me east. I noticed not long since the card of a spiritualistic medium in one of the daily papers, and I attended a séance, determined to see if there was any truth in her pretensions.

"She offered to summon the artist Raphael at her next séance, and promised that he would paint a portrait of my mother before my eyes. Well, sir, I hadn't one particle of faith,—nothing but curiosity, but I was determined to see the matter through, and I did not believe that I could be fooled by the cleverest jugglery. You won't believe me, but she did it. At the next séance she handed me a blank canvas which I marked, and placed upon an easel at the end of the parlor. The lights were burning dimly, but I never took my eyes from it for an instant, and presently, while strains of low music floated through the room, a young man habited in the garb which the pictures of the great artist have made familiar to us, entered, seated himself at the easel and began to paint. This went on for some time, when suddenly the young man vanished, the music ceased, and the lights were turned up. And, sir, before any one could touch that canvas, I jumped for it, and there was a portrait of my mother—unmistakable—like

no one else. Her dear, thin face, and gray hair, the very cross-shaped, agate ear-rings which she used to wear." Lowrie started visibly.

"I tell you it was convincing, and I bought that portrait, paid the medium three hundred dollars for it in gold eagles, and considered it dirt-cheap."

"Clear profit of two hundred and seventy-five dollars," thought Lowrie, but all he said was, "You interest me; pray proceed."

"Well, sir, that medium gave me some astonishing communications from my mother; among others that there was a young lady in the celestial life who was watching over me with great solicitude, who might become my spirit-bride, if I would yield myself to her influence and keep my soul ready and attentive for her advice and guidance. I went night after night, sometimes receiving messages from my mother, sometimes from my spirit-bride, for at length I pledged myself to her. I was wild to see her, to get Raphael to paint her portrait for me, but the medium could not persuade him to do so. He said he didn't feel equal to depicting her beauty. Finally, however, Murillo volunteered to do so, if I would give the medium eight hundred dollars for a mission in Mexico in which he was interested. I always hated Mexicans,—have seen a good deal of 'em in California. They are a low-down set, but I reasoned that as likely as not the medium would not pass the money on, and I was bound to see that girl. Three nights ago, sir, Murillo painted her for me. There was a star shining above her head, but in all other respects she was exactly like the young lady who just went out of that door. Her portrait is at Knoedler's now, being framed. I would like to have you see it."

"And you paid eight hundred dollars for it?" groaned Lowrie.

"A thousand, sir, and it was well worth it."

The flattered artist wrung his guest's hand. "I wish Miss Hamilton could hear you say that. I always said that picture was worth a thousand dollars. I see you are a real connoisseur."

It was the stranger's turn to be mystified. "I don't exactly follow you," he said.

"No matter. Was that all your medium did for you?"

"No, sir. Last night she showed me a representation of our spirit-home, painted by Turner."

"A white castle in rainbow-tinted clouds, wasn't it? A sort of mixture of the Chateau de Chambord and that of Azay le Rideau, like this," and Lowrie sketched his last order for the Mysterious Lady.

"Well, I'll be ——."

"I hope not, for then you will hardly inhabit your spirit-home. How much did you say you paid for that picture?"

"Five hundred dollars."

"Then you paid her fifteen hundred and ninety dollars more than she paid me for painting those pictures, that's all."

"What do you mean?"

"That you have been duped," and Lowrie related his experience with the Mysterious Lady.

"But how do you suppose she possessed herself of my mother's photograph in the first place?"

"I don't know. Have you one such as she sent me?"

"I had. I always keep it inside my pocket-testament, but I lost it from my overcoat pocket the other day."

"Then she is a pickpocket, as well as a fraud. She stole it from you during your first visit to her. The rest is simple enough."

Strange to say, Mr. Atterbury did not seem so indignant as might have been expected. He visited Lowrie frequently, and in the course of his visits became acquainted with John Angelo and Mignon, and, through pampering them, with their mother, and finally with Miss Helen. It was about this time that he gave Lowrie a commission to make certain paintings for him in France. The commission was so well paid for in advance that the young artist decided to go abroad for a year.

During the latter part of his absence, he received a newspaper describing the marriage of Miss Helen

Hamilton to Mr. Henry Atterbury of San José, California. The reporter enlarged on the beauty of the wedding ceremony, and closed his remarks with: "The bride was preceded to the altar by her little niece and nephew, who strewed roses in the pathway of the happy pair."

Lionel Lowrie groaned: "I shall never scoff at spirits again, but they are not all of heaven. Mulhoney was right when he called those children 'thim divils.' If it had not been for them, Atterbury would never have found his 'spirit-bride.'"

Some people seem to love simply for the sake of enjoying the emotion, and without regard to a return, or to the nature of the object. Thackeray asks, in "Esmond," if it be possible for a noble soul to love embodied selfishness, meanness, debauchery. Such a woman as Guy de Maupassant describes in this story (translated for ROMANCE by B. M. Sherman) might have done even that.

THE OLD CHAIR-CANER.

It was the end of the hunt dinner at the Marquis de Bretan's. Eleven hunters, eight ladies and the country doctor were seated around the lighted table, covered with flowers and fruits.

They had been speaking of love, and a great discussion had arisen, the eternal question as to whether one could love truly more than once. Cases of people who had never loved but once were cited; others told of people who had loved several times, passionately. The men, in general, contended that love, like sickness, could attack the same person several times, even lead to suicide, should an obstacle be placed in the way of the passion. Notwithstanding that this way of looking at it seemed reasonable, the ladies, whose opinions were based more on poetry than observation, affirmed that love, true love, the grand passion, could come to mortals but once. A heart once touched remained forever after empty, ravaged, lacerated; no other sentiment, not even a dream, could stir its pulses anew.

The Marquis, who had been in love many times, vigorously combated this belief:

"I tell you, one can love several times, with all one's heart and all one's soul. You tell me of men who have killed themselves for love, as a proof of the impossibility of a second passion. I reply to you, that if they had not been such fools as to commit suicide, they would have been cured and have continued to fall in love, until the end of their lives. There are lovers like drunkards: 'He who has drunk, will drink again—

he who has loved, will love again!' It is merely an affair of temperament."

They chose as arbitrator the Doctor, an old Parisian physician, who had retired to the country, and they begged of him to give them his opinion.

"Candidly," he said, "I have none to give. As the Marquis has said, it is merely an affair of temperament; as for myself, I know of a love which lasted for fifty-five years, without one day's respite, and which only ended in death."

The Marquise clapped her hands.

"Ah! that is charming! What a dream to be thus loved! What happiness to live for fifty-five years enveloped in such a perfect love! How happy he must have been and how he must have blessed his life,—he who was adored like that!"

The physician smiled:

"Truly, madame, you are not mistaken in thinking that the loved one was a man. You know him. He is M. Choquet, the druggist in the town. As for the woman, you know her also. She was the old chair-caner, who came every year to the Chateau. But I will explain more fully."

The enthusiasm of the ladies had died out. Their disgusted faces seemed to say: "Pooh!" as if love could affect only refined and intelligent people, they alone being worthy of the interest of gentlefolks.

The Doctor continued:

"I was called about three months ago to the death-bed of this old woman. She had arrived the evening before, in the wagon which served her as a house, drawn by the donkey, which you have so often seen, and accompanied by two large dogs, her friends and guardians. The curé was already there. She appointed us executors, and, to make her wishes plainer, she told us the story of her life. I know nothing stranger or more touching.

"Her father and mother were caners. She had never had a permanent home on this earth. When small, she had wandered neglected, ragged and dirty. They camped out on the outskirts of the villages, along the

hedges; the horse was detached from the wagon and left to browse by the roadside; the dog slept, his nose buried in his paws; the little one rolled in the grass, while the father and the mother patched, under the shadow of the wayside trees, all the old chairs of the neighborhood. They spoke very little in this ambulance-like dwelling. After the few necessary words, to decide who should go from house to house, emitting the well-known cry of 'Chairs re-caned!' they commenced to weave the straw, face to face and side by side. When the child wandered too far or entered into conversation with some village urchin, the angry voice of her father recalled her, saying: 'Will you come back, rascal!' These were the only words of tenderness she ever heard.

"When she grew older, they sent her to collect the damaged chairs. At that time she made the acquaintance of some of the urchins, in the different places where they wandered, but now it was the parents of these children who called to them angrily: 'Will you come here, scamp! Let me see you dare to speak to the little barefoot!'

"Sometimes the youngsters threw stones at her. Some kind ladies once in a while gave her some pennies, which she hoarded miserly.

"One day—she was then eleven years old—as they were passing through this neighborhood, back of the cemetery, she met little Choquet, who was crying bitterly and bemoaning the loss of two pennies, which a comrade had stolen from him. The little fellow's tears were a revelation to this poor child, who thought that these superior beings knew no sorrow, no trouble, and that life was one uninterrupted joy for them; the sight of the boy's tears completely upset her. She drew near to him, and when she learned the cause of his distress, she pressed into his hand all her savings, seven cents, which he took as a matter of course and quickly dried his tears. Then, mad with joy, she had the audacity to embrace him. As he was busy counting the money, he permitted the caress. Seeing herself neither repulsed nor beaten, she started in again; she threw her

arms around his neck and kissed him on the lips. Then, frightened at what she had done, she fled.

"What had passed through this poor unfortunate one's head? Did she attach herself to this little child, because she had sacrificed her whole fortune to him, or because he had been the first to whom she had given a loving kiss? The mystery remains the same, for the little ones as for the grown ones.

"For months she dreamed of the corner of the cemetery and the little boy. In the hope of meeting him again, she stole from her parents, cribbing a penny here and a penny there, from the price of a chair, or from the money given her with which to buy provisions.

"When she returned, she had two francs in her pocket, but she could only see the little druggist behind his father's counter, very sedate and dignified, between a bright yellow bottle and a deep red one.

"She only loved him more devotedly than ever, dazzled by the glories of the colored water and ravished by this deification of shining crystals.

"She carried away this wonderful memory, and it served to cheer her on her wanderings; when she met him the second year, behind the schoolhouse, playing marbles with his schoolmates, she threw herself upon him, seized him in her arms, kissing him so vehemently that he commenced to howl with fright! Then to quiet him, she gave him all her money—three francs, twenty centimes—a veritable treasure, which he took with eyes bulging from his head with surprise.

"He was so stunned by her munificence that he permitted her to caress him to her heart's content.

"During four years she continued to lavish her savings upon him. He pocketed them without any qualms of conscience, giving in exchange kisses. Once it was thirty centimes, another time two francs, once only twelve centimes (this time, she wept bitter tears of humiliation and mortification, but the year had been a bad one), and the last time it was five francs, a big, round five-franc piece, in giving which she laughed with glee.

"She thought only of him, and he, on his part, awaited her return with a certain amount of impatience, running to meet her on seeing her, thus making the poor girl's heart leap with joy.

"Then he disappeared. He had been sent to college, she found out by questioning the villagers. Then she had resource to strategy, to make her parents change their route, so that they would pass through here during his vacation. After infinite trouble and a year spent in the endeavor, she succeeded. She had then been two years without seeing him; she hardly knew him, he had changed so much, grown taller, more manly and vastly important in his gown and gold buttons. He pretended not to see her and passed her proudly by.

"She wept for two days, and from that time forth she suffered unceasingly. Every year she returned, passing him by, not daring to notice him and he not deigning to turn his eyes toward her. She loved him to distraction. She told me: 'He was the only man in the world for me, Doctor; I did not know that other men existed even.'

"Her parents died. She continued their trade, but she took two dogs instead of one, two terrible dogs, whom no one would have dared to face.

"One day, on entering this village, in which she had left her heart, she saw young Choquet coming out of the drug-store, arm-in-arm with a young woman. She was his wife; they were bride and groom.

"That evening she threw herself into the lake. A drunken man staggering home fished her out and carried her to the apothecary's. Choquet cared for her, rubbing and slapping her, until he finally brought her to, and then he said in a stern harsh voice: 'How crazy you are! You must not be such a fool!'

"He had spoken to her, and she was happy for a long time afterward. He would take no remuneration for his services, though she offered to pay him.

"Her whole life rolled by thus. She wove her straw, thinking of Choquet. Each year she saw him, behind his counter. She purchased her small supply of drugs

from him, and thus contrived to see and speak with him.

"As I told you in the beginning, she died this spring. After having related her sad story to me, she prayed me to remit to the one whom she had so devotedly loved all the hoardings of her life; as she had worked for him only, even fasting to save for him. She wanted to be sure that at last, for once in his life, he would think of her when she was dead.

"She gave me two thousand three hundred and twenty-seven francs. I left twenty-seven francs with the priest, to defray her funeral expenses, and carried away the rest.

"The next day I went to the Choquets' house. They had just finished breakfast, and sat face-to-face, red and fat, prosperous on the profits of the pharmacy, self-important and satisfied.

"They bade me be seated; they offered me a biscuit, which I accepted, and I commenced my discourse, in a voice broken by emotion, persuaded that their hearts would be touched.

"As soon as he comprehended that he had been loved by this chair-caner, this vagabond, this wanderer, Choquet was overcome with indignation, as though she had stolen his reputation from him, the esteem of honest men, his honor even, something which was dearer than life to him.

"His wife, as angry as himself, could only repeat, 'The wretch! the wretch!'

"He had arisen and was striding angrily up and down the room. His cap was over on one ear; he stammered, 'Do you understand my position, Doctor? This is a horrible position for me to be in. What am I to do? Oh, if I had only known of it, when she was alive, I would have had her arrested for vagrancy and thrown into prison. I can assure you, she would not have come out very soon.'

"I remained stupefied at the result of my pious mission. I did not know what to say or what to do. But I hurried to get through and to leave. I continued: 'She charged me to remit to you two thousand three

hundred francs, her entire savings. As everything connected with her seems so repugnant to you, it would be better perhaps for me to give this money to the poor.'

"They looked at me, husband and wife, dumb with astonishment.

"I drew the money from my pocket, this miserable money of all countries and all kinds, gold and pennies mixed together. Then I asked them, 'What have you decided upon?'

"Madame Choquet spoke first: 'Well, as it was the last wish of this woman—it seems to me that we have no right to refuse it.'

"The husband, a little embarrassed, replied: 'We might buy something for the children with it.'

"I answered dryly: 'As you please!'

"'Give it to me, at any rate, as long as she willed it to me; we will find some good use to put it to.'

"I gave him the money, bowed and left.

"The next day Choquet came to me and, in a confused manner, said: 'She left a wagon, this woman, did she not? What are you going to do with it?'

"'Nothing. Take it if you wish.'

"'Well, it will suit me. I can use it for my chickens.'

"He turned to go, but I called him back: 'She has left her old horse and her two dogs. Do you wish them?'

"He stopped in surprise: 'Why, no; what would you have me do with them? Dispose of them to suit yourself.' And then he laughed. He held out his hand to me, which I took. What would you have me do? It would not look well for the Druggist and the Doctor to be bad friends.

"I have the dogs; the curé, who has a large yard, has the horse. The wagon Choquet uses for his chickens, and he has bought five railroad shares with the money.

"This is the only example of true love that I have met with in my life."

The Doctor was silent.

Then the Marquise, whose eyes were filled with tears, said, sighing:

"Truly, only women know how to love!"

There are certain characters concerning whom the most trivial bit of information is of interest. Such is the hero of this lively little narrative. The truth of it is vouched for by L. Cleveland, who has written it for ROMANCE.

WHO WAS HE?

"SHALL I tell you how I met him, my dear?" the artist laughed while slowly deepening the shadows of the marble balustrade on the Pincian. "I never was more scared in my life than when the *dénoûement* came on the platform of the Brighton Railway Station. I thought I should have fainted. However——"

"Oh, please go on," I said. "Can you talk while you are putting in that 'high light' on the terrace?"

"Oh, yes, indeed," the artist laughed again. "Do you know it brings back to me the sunlight along the English hedge-rows on that Red Letter Day of distinction and—dismay! Well——"

"Well, do go on!"

"You remember I told you of my uncle's kindness in offering to pay for my art-education in Europe,—or course, in Paris. I had not one cent—never expected to have one cent—and he offered to defray the entire expenses of my four years in Paris, two in Rome, and a grand tour in Spain—for study and rest. But it was in England that I met *him!*"

"Do go on!"

"On the steamer to England, I had the good fortune to win the notice, courtesies and regard of Lord and Lady B——, who were returning home after a trip through our great West, the Yellowstone, the Yosemite, etc.

"The day we were steaming up the Irish Sea, my lord and lady insisted that I should spend ten days with them at their country seat in ——shire. It was a round of pleasure and of gayety during that fortnight at Leigh Hall. The day before I left," the

artist put down her palette and maul-stick, and after carefully screwing on the cap of her ultramarine, turned slowly to face me, "Lady B—— arranged to take me to Brighton, 'to give you a glimpse, Miss Dare, of an English watering-place before France and the French win all your heart—and your colors.'

"Of course we went first-class. *Ça va sans dire* for the English elect. At Three Bridges, we had to change cars,—'carriages' I mean. As we stepped into the luxurious first-class compartment, I noticed in the corner of the 'carriage' a gentleman sitting. He wore a long gray ulster. He wore a black felt hat. He wore his hair long. He wore—a wonderful face. No, it didn't put on and off. It was himself. I have never forgotten that profile against the shadow and the sunlight. He was, seemingly, absorbed in thought, gazing out of the window, but seeing nothing of the bloom and verdure and spring-tide that blushed and nodded and warbled along the hedge-rows of England's June—seeing nothing save the light that never was on sea or land—and the bloom of the Ideal. He paid no attention to us as we glided aristocratically into the select 'first,' and deposited on the cushions the inevitable shawls and umbrellas which must (in England) always go to a 'watering-place' for a day or a decade of days. Do you know, I was immediately attracted in a curious sort of a way to the face in the corner. Its lines were as rhythmical as music, and I felt provoked at the *sang-froid* which didn't even notice me—eyes that searched only the bloom outside, and yet seemed to see nothing even of that. I had been such a pet in Belgravia for a fortnight past that I was provoked at the limitless coolness which did not even turn its head to look at me.

"I was provoked—just that—provoked.

"I was a rattle-brain, dear, as you know, in that first halcyon period of my ventures, and action was inevitable. My chaperon, moreover, through world-wide travel, world-wide acquaintance with climates and temperaments and idiosyncrasies of men and women, had lost the usual well-laundried presence of the English tourist. How it was that conversation began with the

wonderful voice—and eyes—in the corner, I hardly know, but it must have been something like this:

"'I'm provoked!' I said, in French, to my lady. 'Isn't it delightful that no one in the cars can understand us?' I glanced, half-distrustfully, but on the whole quite confidently, at the profile of power and repose silhouetted against the speeding background of bloom. 'That man can't understand us. He doesn't look like it. He's as handsome as a picture, though. I'd like to paint him.'

"'His tint is matchless, Frène.'

"'I will' (still in French). 'I declare I will. He looks as blue as indigo, though, over something or other. I guess he's an old sea-dog. I'll wash him in ultramarine. He'll make a lovely water-color.'

"'Frène, Frène!'

"'He can't understand us, Lady B——. Not a word. I'm going to have a good time. I've been on my good behavior long enough in the London Social Swim. If he's an old sea-dog, he can swim, too. Do you suppose he knows how to flirt?'

"Did the edges of the lips in the shadow of the carriage-curtains twitch? He coughed slightly and laid his hat on the cushions opposite. I glanced out of the corner of my eye—but his gaze was once more beyond the horizon-rim.

"'I wonder if my hat is straight,' I continued, still in French. 'I'm sure my collar is crumpled. I never saw anything like it. There isn't a squint of a looking-glass in these horrid old English cars.'

"I looked out of the window, and preened my London feather a bit.

"'Is that your handkerchief, Frène?' my lady said (in English)—glanced at me, and directed my eyes across the carriage. The figure in the corner was holding out to me my tiny toy, with finished ease and courtesy—and with a brilliant smile.

"'Oh, thank you—*mille pardons, monsieur*—I mean—thank you very much.' I felt suddenly as hot as the Gunpowder Plot at the smile and a something beyond the knowledge of Belgravia or Britain 'way down in the

depths of two dark eyes which held me spellbound, and nearly took my breath away.

"'I think you will find the view on this side of the carriage the finer, mademoiselle,' he said; 'the glimpse is lovely across that upland.'

"The train was speeding on toward a gap in the hills where the view opened out into lovely dale and dimpled downs, red chimney-tops of thatched cottages smoking lazily beneath clustering trees, and little birds dipping and hiding in deep meadow-dew, and speeding away to tell the clouds of a nest among the gorses as warm as the sun-orbit and stars.

"'Now's my opportunity,' I said half to myself (in French) as I shook out my Belgravian smile and took my seat opposite the brilliant face.

"The face began to waken, and my hero began to talk. We talked of—everything. From Calcutta (my lady's home some time ago) through the lore of the Hindoos straight through to the Hottentots. There was not a speck of Jew or Gentile left that did not come within the focus of our mental camera. The eyes in the corner drew it out of us—and made us talk. And I couldn't help myself. And I didn't want to.

"Drifting through lights and shadows on seas and sands—on the Sahara and the Dominion of Canada—around the world in eighty wonderful minutes, the talk at last stayed on me and mine—'mine *Art.*' I unfolded my plans, hopes, future medals, Red Ribbon, even—*qui le sait?*—with an American audacity which would have surprised even George Washington. Where was I to study? With Léon Coignet, and at the *Beaux Arts.* I should meet——? Yes, I was to meet Gustave Doré, Gérôme, the *crême de la crême* of the world of art. Was I to travel? Oh, yes, I was to travel. I was to visit the Alhambra and—well, all things are possible to him that painteth—gaze upon the Kremlin, and moisten my brushes in Nile waters, perhaps in the flame-cauldrons of the sun, or in the midnight snows of the moon—or in something or other that man had never reached. Who knew but that I might study the Arctic Bear at home? I meant his home.

"And I had tasted the social——?

"Oh, yes! *Soirées*, balls, concerts. There was that great affair just ten days ago—where I had met so many great—swells, as you English say. Lord and Lady Lyons, Lord Palmerston, our Motley—I didn't mean any joke, Lady B——; his talents are as superb and varied as Joseph's coat. What is that new pun that London has just made: *The American Ministers are more Jay than Motley?*—I began to wonder about my hat again.

"'You will permit me one question, mademoiselle. You puzzle me very much. You are, surely, not English,' his lip twitched a little. Surely you are not *Deutsch*, certainly not a Yankee,—your accent is quite different from that of the Americans whom I have met,—and, surely, you are not French.' Again the lip twitched. 'From what country do you hail?'

"'From Hail Columbia,' I said promptly, 'and I'm a Western Yankee at that.' (I wondered again if I looked as well as at Lady L——'s garden-party.) 'You have never visited our Wild West?'

"'I commenced my travels in Timbuctoo,' he began, a smile growing and kindling on his splendid face.

"'Timbuctoo! You have been in Timbuctoo! You did not tell us that when we were talking about Calcutta. It's next door to it, isn't it? Timbuctoo!' and I rattled off a mass of nonsense suggested by the old rhymes about the name, when suddenly '*Patcham! Patcham!*' the guard's voice rang out along the platform—and the train moved into the station.

"'I have a letter to post during our three minutes here. You will pardon me, ladies.' The tall figure bowed and alighted.

"'Delightful man!' I burst out. 'I do wonder who he is? An old English army officer, retired, I suppose, on half-pay. Fills up his leisure—hasn't anything but leisure—by writing and scribbling on Timbuctoo. Sunburnt, isn't he? I wish I knew what he did in Timbuctoo! I'm going to ask him. I'm afraid I've talked like a fool. I wonder if my hat is on straight? I know I look like a fright.'

"My lady laughed—and opened her reticule.

"'A looking-glass! as I live!' I exclaimed. 'No. It's a Claude Lorraine glass. But it will do as well.'

"'I will lend it to you, Frène, for France.'

"'Oh, thank you! Ah, there he comes back again!'

"A short distance, only, between Patcham and Brighton, but a long distance of bright talk. My Belgravian smile was, I felt sure, better than in Belgravia. But why did the lips in the shadow of the carriage-curtains twitch so? I rattled ahead with a recklessness that was monstrous. The face opposite to me talked to us in words that were visions.

"'*Brighton! Brighton!*'

"We alighted, gathered up shawls, umbrellas, reticule, maid (from third class), and prepared to move toward the 'fly' which was to convey us around the town.

"The tall figure in the heavy cloak approached us. I got out the Belgravian smile again.

"'I shall be very glad to see you, ladies, during your stay in Brighton, be it long or short.' With finished ease and courtesy he took out two visiting-cards, and handed them, one to my chaperon, one to myself.

"As I live, my dear, I could have fallen on the platform. My foolish babble rushed back upon me in a torrent. What had I said! And where was the Belgravian smile? And what about the collar! *Ach Weh! Ach Weh!* On the card was engraven:

"*Alfred Tennyson.*"

Charming stories of the kindness of actors abound in the annals of dramatic art, but perhaps there was never a sweeter one than this by Jules Claretie, made into English (for the *Yankee Blade*) by Mary Stuart Symonds.

BOUM-BOUM.

THE child was lying stretched out in his little white bed, and his eyes, grown large through fever, looked straight before him, always with the strange fixity of the sick who already perceive what the living do not see.

The mother at the foot of the bed, torn by suffering and wringing her hands to keep herself from crying, anxiously followed the progress of the disease on the poor, emaciated face of the little being. The father, an honest workman, kept back the tears which burned his eyelids.

The June day broke clear and mild, and lighted up the narrow room in the street of the Abbesses where little François, the child of Jacques and Madeleine Legrand, lay dying. He was seven years old, and was very fair, very rosy, very lively. Not three weeks ago he was gay as a sparrow; but a fever had seized him, and they had brought him home one evening from the public school with his head heavy and his hands very hot. From that time he had been here in this bed, and sometimes in his delirium when he looked at his well-blacked shoes, which his mother had placed in a corner on a board, he said,—

"You can throw them away now, little François' shoes! Little François will not put them on any more! Little François will not go to school any more . . . never, never!"

Then the father cried out and said: "Wilt thou be still!" And the mother, very pale, buried her blond head in his pillow, so that little François could not hear her weep.

This night the child had not been delirious; but for the two days past the doctor had been uneasy over an odd sort of prostration which had seized him; it was as if at seven years he already felt the weariness of life. He was tired, silent, sad, and tossed his little head about on the bolster. He had no longer a smile on his poor, thin lips, and with haggard eye he seemed to look at, they knew not what, something beyond them,—very far off.

"In Heaven, perhaps!" thought Madeleine, trembling.

When they wished him to take medicine, syrup, or a little soup, he refused. He refused everything.

"Dost thou wish anything, François?"

"No, I wish nothing!"

"We must draw him out of this," the doctor said. "This torpor frightens me! You are the father and mother, you know your child well. Seek for something to reanimate this little body. Recall to earth this spirit which runs after the clouds!"

Then he went away.

"Seek!"

Yes, without doubt they knew him well, their François, these worthy people! They knew how it amused him to plunder the hedges on Sunday and to come back to Paris on his father's shoulders laden with hawthorn. Jacques Legrand had bought some images, some gilded soldiers, and some Chinese shadows for François; he cut them out, put them on the child's bed and made them dance before the bewildered eyes of the little one, and with a desire to weep himself he tried to make him laugh.

"Dost thou see, it is the broken bridge. Tire, tire, tire! And this is the general! Thou rememberest we saw one, a general, once, in the Bois de Boulogne? If thou takest the medicine well, I will buy thee a real one, with a cloth tunic, and gold epaulettes. . . . Dost thou wish for him, the general, say?"

"No," replied the child, in the dry voice which fever gives.

"Dost thou wish a pistol, some marbles—a cross-bow?"

"No," repeated the little voice, clearly and almost cruelly.

And to all that they said to him, to all the jumping-jacks, to all the balloons that they promised him, the little voice—while the parents looked at each other in despair—responded,—

"No." "No." "No!"

"But what dost thou wish, my François?" asked the mother. "Let us see, there is certainly something thou wouldst like to have. Tell it, tell it to me! to me! . . . thy mother!" And she laid her cheek on the pillow of the sick boy, and whispered this softly in his ear, as if it were a secret. Then the child, with an odd accent, straightening himself up in his bed and stretching out his hand eagerly toward some invisible thing, replied suddenly in an ardent tone, at the same time supplicating and imperative,—

"I want Boum-Boum!"

Boum-Boum!

Poor Madeleine threw a frightened look toward her husband. What did the little one say? Was it the delirium, the frightful delirium, which had come back again?

Boum-Boum!

She did not know what that meant, and she was afraid of these singular words which the child repeated with a sickly persistence, as if, not having dared until now to formulate his dream, he grasped the present time with invincible obstinacy:

"Yes, Boum-Boum! Boum-Boum! I want Boum-Boum!"

The mother had seized Jacques' hand and spoke very low, and as if demented.

"What does that mean, Jacques? He is lost!"

But the father had on his rough, workingman's face a smile almost happy, but astonished, too, the smile of a condemned man who foresees a possibility of liberty.

Boum-Boum! He remembered well the morning of Easter Monday when he had taken François to the circus. He had still in his ears the child's outbursts of joy, the happy laugh of the amused boy, when the

clown, the beautiful clown, all spangled with gold and with a great gilded, many-colored butterfly sparkling on the back of his black costume, skipped across the track, gave the trip to a rider or held himself motionless and stiff on the sand, his head down and his feet in the air. Or again he tossed up to the chandelier some soft, felt hats which he caught adroitly on his head, where they formed one by one, a pyramid; and at each jest, like a refrain brightening up his droll and intelligent face, he uttered the same cry, repeated the same word, accompanied now and then by a burst from the orchestra: "Boum-Boum!"

"Boum-Boum!" and each time that it rang out,—"Boum-Boum," the audience burst out into hurrahs and the little one joined in with his hearty, little laugh. Boum-Boum! It was this Boum-Boum, it was the clown of the circus, it was this favorite of a large part of the city, that little François wished to see and to have, and whom he could not have and could not see, since he was lying here without strength in his white bed.

In the evening, Jacques Legrand brought the child a jointed clown, all stitched with spangles, which he had bought in a passage-way and which was very expensive. It was the price of four of his working-days! But he would have given twenty, thirty, he would have given the price of a year's labor to bring back a smile to the pale lips of the sick child.

The child looked at the plaything a moment as it glistened on the white cover of the bed, then said, sadly:

"It is not Boum-Boum! . . . I want to see Boum-Boum!"

Ah! if Jacques could have wrapped him up in his blankets, could have carried him to the circus, could have shown him the clown dancing under the lighted chandelier, and have said to him, "Look!" He did better, Jacques, he went to the circus, demanded the address of the clown, and timidly, his legs shaking with fear, he climbed, one by one, the steps which led to the apartment of the artist, at Montmartre. It was very bold, this that Jacques was going to do. But,

after all, the comedians go to sing and recite their monologues in drawing-rooms, at the houses of the great lords. Perhaps the clown—oh, if he only would! —would consent to come and say good-day to François. How would they receive him, Jacques Legrand, here at Boum-Boum's house?

He was no longer Boum-Boum! He was Monsieur Moreno, and, in the artistic dwelling, the books, the engravings, the elegance, were like choice decorations around the charming man who received Jacques in an office like that of a doctor.

Jacques looked but did not recognize the clown, and turned and twisted his felt hat between his fingers. The other waited. Then the father excused himself. "It was astonishing what he came there to ask, it could not be—pardon, excuse. But, in short, it was concerning a little one—a nice little one, monsieur. And so intelligent! Always the first at school, except in arithmetic, which he did not understand. A dreamer, this little one, do you see? Yes, a dreamer. And the proof —wait—the proof——"

Jacques now hesitated, stammered; but he gathered up his courage, and said brusquely:

"The proof is that he wishes to see you, that he thinks only of you, and that you are there before him like a star, which he would like to have, and that he looks——"

When he had finished, the father was deadly pale and he had great drops on his forehead. He dared not look at the clown, who remained with his eyes fixed on the workman. And what was he going to say, this Boum-Boum? Was he going to dismiss him, take him for a fool and put him out the door?

"You live?"

"Oh, very near! Street of the Abbesses."

"Come!" said the other. "Your boy wants to see Boum-Boum? Ah, well, he is going to see Boum-Boum."

. . . . . .

When the door opened and showed the clown, Jacques Legrand cried out joyfully to his son:

"François, be happy, child! See, here he is, Boum-Boum!"

A look of great joy came over the child's face. He raised himself on his mother's arm, and turned his head toward the two men who approached, questioning, for a moment, who it was by the side of his father; this gentleman in an overcoat, whose good, pleasant face he did not know. When they said to him: "It is Boum-Boum!" he slowly fell back on the pillow and remained there, his eyes fixed, his beautiful large, blue eyes, which looked beyond the walls of the little room and were always seeking the spangles and the butterfly of Boum-Boum, like a lover who pursues his dream.

"No," replied the child with a voice which was no longer dry, but full of despair, "no, it is not Boum-Boum."

The clown, standing near the little bed, threw upon the child an earnest look, very grave but of an inexpressible sweetness.

He shook his head, looked at the anxious father, the grief-stricken mother, and said, smiling, "He is right, this is not Boum-Boum!" and then he went out.

"I cannot see him, I shall never see Boum-Boum any more!" repeated the child, whose little voice spoke to the angels. "Boum-Boum is perhaps there, there, where little François will soon go."

But suddenly—it was only half-an-hour since the clown had disappeared—the door opened quickly, and in his black, spangled clothes, his yellow cap on his head, the gilded butterfly on his breast and on his back, with a smile as big as the mouth of a money-box, and a powdered face, Boum-Boum, the true Boum-Boum, the Boum-Boum of the circus, the Boum-Boum of the popular neighborhood, the Boum-Boum of little François—Boum-Boum appeared.

Lying on his little white bed, the child clapped his thin little hands, laughing, crying, happy, saved, with a joy of life in his eyes, and cried "Bravo" with his seven-year gayety, which all at once kindled up like a match.

"Boum-Boum! It is he, it is he, this time! Here is Boum-Boum! Long live Boum-Boum! Good-day, Boum-Boum."

And when the doctor came back, he found, seated by little François's bedside, a clown with a pale face, who made the little one laugh again and again, and who said to the child, while he was stirring a piece of sugar into a cup of medicine,—

"Thou knowest, if thou dost not drink, little François, Boum-Boum will not come back any more."

So the child drank.

"Is it not good?"

"Very good! Thanks, Boum-Boum!"

"Doctor," said the clown to the doctor, "do not be jealous. It seems to me that my grimaces will do him as much good as your prescriptions!"

The father and mother wept, but this time from joy.

Until little François was on his feet again a carriage stopped every day before the dwelling of a workman in the street of the Abbesses, at Montmartre, and a man got out with a gay powdered face; he was enveloped in an overcoat with the collar turned back, and underneath it one could see a clown's costume.

"What do I owe you, monsieur?" said Jacques, at last, to the master-clown when the child took his first walk. "I must owe you a great deal."

The clown stretched out his two soft but Herculean hands to the parents.

"A shake of the hand!" said he.

Then, placing two great kisses on the once-more rosy cheeks of the child,—

"And," laughing, "permission to put on my visiting card,—

BOUM-BOUM

Acrobatic Doctor and Physician in ordinary to little François!"

Those who do not like pathetic love-stories, will do well to skip this touching sketch of life in the Virginia mountains. It is by Helen Lee Sargent and first appeared in *Harper's Magazine.*

"FOR LOOLY."

"WELL, Tom, here's your month's wages."

Old Tom Wicks's wrinkled and tobacco-stained visage put on a grin of intense delight as he took the gold-piece that the distillery paymaster, young Jim Baskins, handed him.

"And look here," pursued that young man, whose flashy attire indicated the would-be exquisite, "why don't you use this money, Tom, to fix yourself up a little? Here you've been working for us six months, and every time you come around to get your pay you look poorer than you did before. Now," continued Mr. Jim Baskins, out of the kindness of a heart which really liked and pitied the quiet, ragged old teamster, "take this money and get yourself a suit of clothes."

The old man did not look displeased, but he shook his head decidedly.

"I like ye fustrate, Jim," he said, "but I cayn't."

"Why not?"

"Why, Merce, my gal—Mercy—— I do' know's you knew I had a gal."

The old man stopped, and looked as though he wondered if he could quite trust Jim Baskins. Then he went on, as though the recollection of that young person's kind offices, which had been as numerous toward Tom Wicks as their circumstances had permitted, had reassured him.

"Merce, ye see, she ain't had no chance. An' thar's Looly; she's the little 'un; she's goin' on 'leven now, ye know?"

The young man laughed at his interrogative tone. "No, I didn't know; but I do know now."

"Wa'al, she's right peart, Looly is; an' Merce she

says, says she, 'Looly's got to have a chance.' She jest sots by Looly more'n anything else in the world. An', Lord! what'd she do when I got this chance to team it but, says she, 'Now, paw, we've got this er money,' says she, 'an' when thar's a lot saved, why, we'll take it an' Looly shall go to school, an' Looly shall have good clo'es,' says she. 'I'm too old,' says she—goin' on twenty, Merce is. 'But,' says she, 'I'll fix things so 't Looly kin go, 'f ye'll give me over the money,' says she."

"Most girls would have wanted it for themselves," commented Mr. Jim Baskins, getting interested in old Tom Wicks's strange daughter.

The old man shook his head. "Merce ain't that kyind. She's most twice's old's the little 'un; named her herself outen a book she read. Merce is a powerful hand to read—kin read anything an' everything; hez read all the neighbors' books; reckon she'd 'a come down to Marlinsburg to git books, on'y she ain't ben down yer f'r two 'r three years now; says she's shamed to come yer—'count of her clo'es; powerful proud, Merce is. But, says she, 'Looly 'll grow up harnsum an' smart,' says she, 'an' Looly 'll have a chance, an' good clo'es; an' Looly shall go to Marlinsburg an' everywhar, an' hold up her head with anybody.' 'But,' says I"—old Tom Wicks warmed to his subject as he saw the eager attention paid him by his absorbed listener—"says I, 'thar's the boys. Ye cayn't keep them boys from the money,' says I—them boys—they's two on 'em, eighteen an' sixteen y'rs old they be, an' a powerful hard lot, Jake an' Lewt—up ter everything. 'They'll git holt of it, Merce,' says I; 'they'll steal it outen my pockets, or outen the tea-pot, or outen any place ye chuse ter put it,' says I. An' Merce she says, says she, 'They will, will they? That money 'll go fer Looly,' says she. 'I'll hide it whar nobody cayn't git it, boys nor nobody else,' she says; an' 'pon that she—— Now ye won't never tell what I'm goin' ter say?" queried the old man, pulling himself up short, and suddenly recollecting that he was on the verge of disclosing a state secret of stupendous proportions. The painfully

curious look that he gave into the vain but honest face of Jim Baskins, added to the bluff assurance of the latter that "he never would, so help him!" delivered in the most convincing manner, restored the old man's confidence, and he went on: "She started"—Tom Wicks lowered his voice impressively—"the fust night I drawed my pay, an' up she skips it onto the mountain; an' she's got a iron box up thar, an' she's dug a hole, an' thar she puts it, an' them boys hain't no conceit o' whar the money goes ter. They thinks I banks it 'r suthin down yer. That's why I wants it in gold," said the old man, apologetically. "Merce says, 'It mought be ten years afore we'll git it all spent,' says she, 'an' it 'd better be gold.'"

"You do pretty much as 'Merce' says, don't you?" remarked the young man, with something of a sneer in his tone.

Tom Wicks bristled. "Ye—don't—know—Mercy Wicks," he said, straightening up and looking at young Baskins with warning in his eyes. "She's a prime 'un, Merce is. Got a head—Lord, what a deep 'un she is! Talks jes' like a book—read so many novels. The old woman she dips mostly; an' thar's Bet to hum—she's goin' on fifteen. Then thar was some more, but they died when they was babies. But Bet she's sorter wooden-headed, an' it's Merce 't keeps 'em all a-goin'. Merce ain't had no chance, but she's a powerful smart gal."

"You haven't ever asked me up to your house, Tom," said the young man, insinuatingly.

Tom Wicks understood him, but he hesitated.

"Do you have to ask 'Merce,' as you call her, before you can invite anybody to tea?"

Young Baskins laughed good-humoredly, but his words had a sarcastic sting in them for the fond father.

"'Tain't much of a place to ask folks to," he said at length.

"Well, I'd like to meet your family," persisted Jim Baskins. "I've been a good deal interested in your account of them, and I'd like to see them."

"Merce she says," suggested the old man, floundering

about in his attempt to avoid doing something which he knew would displease his daughter—"she says we're too dog-on low an' poor to have respectable company, an' she ain't a-goin' to have no other kind."

"She must be a very proud-spirited girl." Mr. Jim Baskins ignored any inferences that might have been drawn by a more captious person from Mr. Wicks's remonstrance.

"Wa'al, the old woman she ain't no great hand fer cookin', an' Merce ain't never had nobody to tell her how. She does the best she knows, but, Lord—wa'al, I s'pose ye can come, 'f ye'll excuse the looks"—the old man's naturally hospitable disposition inclined him to yield to Mr. Baskins's importunity—"an' 'f Merce is kinder cross, ye mustn't mind."

Mr. Jim Baskins smiled a complacent smile as he glanced down at the tawdry plaids and checks of his spring suit and the glittering chains and rings which bedecked his comfortable person. It must be a very hard-hearted maiden, he thought, who could long be angry with such as he.

"I'm not so terribly afraid of 'Merce' as you are," he said.

The old man gave his head a significant twist, as much as to say, "Wait until you see her," and turning his gaunt horses away from the low distillery in front of which they had been talking, they jolted away up the mountain-side and toward the lonely gulch, or hollow, in which stood the small homestead of the Wicks family. It was a weary ride, and the long spring day had vanished into a starry night when Tom Wicks drew up with a startling "Whoa!" in front of the squalid and unsavory-looking abode where they were to alight.

Mr. Jim Baskins could not help giving a little gasp of dismay when he saw it. He hadn't expected anything quite so bad as that.

The old man vaguely felt his visitor's disappointment.

"I told ye so," he said, half angrily, half sorrowfully. "Ye needn't 'a come. I didn't urge ye."

"Who said anything?" began the young man, in con-

fused apology for his unspoken offence, when his speech was cut short by the apparition of a young woman who had opened the door at the sound of Tom Wicks's "Whoa!" and was hurrying toward him. "Have you got it, pa?" she asked, eagerly, and she had approached quite close to him before she observed the young man sitting on the other side.

"Here's Mr. Baskins—Jim Baskins, of Marlinsburg—Merce," he said, trying feebly to smile as he announced his unwelcome guest. "He thought he'd kinder like ter see the country hereabouts, and I brought him up to supper with us."

Mercy Wicks's fine face darkened, and she looked down instinctively upon her soiled and ragged dress and her bare feet. Old Wicks could not have told what there was in her motion that affected him—this sudden mortification on the part of a girl who had scarcely ever in her life worn a better garb than the tattered and unsightly one in which she was clad at that moment; but he felt just then as though he would rather have died than have brought young Baskins up from Marlinsburg. He rejoiced inwardly that he had had the courage to suggest to that individual during their ride up the mountain that, in case there wasn't any place for him to sleep in the Wicks cottage, there was a man a mile further on who would keep him for a slight consideration.

"There isn't much for supper," said Mercy, deliberately regarding the interloper with wide blue eyes, and holding herself erect with an air of dignity quite out of keeping with her surroundings, "but what we've got Mr. Baskins can have too, I suppose. Supper is all ready."

Her voice was pleasant, in spite of the disapprobation which deepened it, and her manner was that of a person accustomed to authority; and although the light braids of hair which hung far down her back bore visible signs of neglect, and the details of her whole appearance were far from prepossessing, there was something about her which made the young man feel that her father's eulogies upon her were not misplaced, and

that she was a girl capable of much heroism, albeit Mr. Jim Baskins was not particularly susceptible to impressions, and his fibre was coarse. He wondered whether, if she were attired after the fashion of the "set" of young ladies with whom he associated in Marlinsburg, she would be "pretty." This, however, was rather too much for Mr. Baskins's imagination, and he did not long dwell upon it.

The supper consisted of a hoe-cake, a pitcher of molasses, some cold sliced bacon, and a pot of tea, and though served in a style which was not particularly appetizing, young Mr. Baskins was able to disregard that, and to eat a hearty meal. The two "boys" were not present, but their absence did not seem to be anything unusual, and nobody appeared to sorrow because they were not there.

They were scarcely seated around the rickety table when Mercy exclaimed, "Bet, where's ma?"

A tallow-faced girl, to whom Mr. Wicks had not thought it necessary to introduce their visitor, rose from the table, and turning herself slowly about, peered into the recesses of the one room which formed the lower story of the little cabin.

"I dun know," she answered, stupidly.

"Go out-doors, Looly," said Mercy to the bright-faced little creature who was sitting close beside her; "maybe she's out there—fell asleep, perhaps, under the big tree."

The child started obediently, and soon returned, saying that her mother was indeed "out under the big tree," but that she could not wake her up nor make her understand that supper was ready. Her sister made no comment upon this information, nor did any one else, and the meal went on in silence.

"Been having a big revival in Marlinsburg," began Mr. Baskins at last, in an attempt to promote sociability.

"Ye don't say," responded Tom Wicks.

"Oh yes; they're all getting religion down our way. Moonshining 'll have to go under, I reckon."

The old man looked half alarmed. He could not bear

to think for an instant that the great industry upon which he was a pensioner could possibly "go under."

"Oh, not so bad as that," continued Mr. Baskins, with a short laugh, observing his host's startled expression, "but it does seem as if half Marlinsburg was going to the meetings and getting converted. Old Sparhawk, that railroad man down there, lives in that splendid house, richest man in Marlinsburg, he's been converted; and his son—just come of age, I believe—he's going to be a parson, they say. Oh, there's no end of a fuss down there. I don't take much stock in it myself."

Mercy was looking at him now, with wide-open, interested eyes.

"I went to a meeting once," she said, with a simplicity that disarmed all his previous criticism.

"Well, you didn't think much of it, did you?" he asked, jokingly.

"Yes," she answered, gravely. "I liked it very much. The man that preached—it was up here on the camp-ground—he gave me a Testament. I've read it through a great many times."

"Understand it all?" inquired the young man, cynically.

"No," she said, relaxing nothing of her seriousness. "But I can understand some of it," she added, a moment later.

"Pretty good hunting hereabouts?" asked Mr. Baskins, abruptly. He wanted to change the subject of the conversation. He had not counted upon the girl's taking it so much in earnest.

"Ask Merce," said the old man; "she an' the boys mostly 'tends to the shootin'."

"So you can shoot?" interrogated Mr. Baskins, turning patronizingly to Mercy Wicks.

"Yes," said Mercy, pleasantly.

"Can you hit 'em on the wing?" inquired the young man, jocularly.

"Every time," she returned, as good-humoredly. A little scowl that had hitherto rested upon her face was disappearing, and this unwonted social relaxation lent her a look of interest and vivacity. Mr. Baskins began

to decide that, properly accoutred, she might, after all, be "pretty."

He sat next her, and now he moved his chair a little nearer to hers.

"Why don't you sometimes drive down with your father to Marlinsburg?" he said.

"I don't get much time to drive around," replied Mercy, shrinking into herself a little as she felt, rather than observed, the slight change in his manner.

"I should be pleased to take you around the town," he continued, with attempted gallantry.

"I can't go." Mercy turned abruptly to her father: "You'd better go out and fetch in ma. She'll catch her death out there in the damp."

The old man rose slowly and walked away.

"Are you going back to Marlinsburg to-night?" inquired Mr. Baskins's peculiar young hostess. She had been perplexed upon this subject ever since he had come, and her straightforward and untaught soul was determined to discover his intentions.

"I don't know," replied her guest, in some embarrassment. "Your father said something about a house not far away where they sometimes took lodgers."

"You see, we haven't any room in this house to keep anybody," said Mercy, with frank seriousness. "I didn't know but you came up to see somebody else."

"No," said the young man, looking intently into her face. "I came up here expressly to see you."

"To see me?" she repeated, incredulously.

"Your father has told me a good deal about you, and I thought I should like to get acquainted with you. He warned me that you didn't like company very well."

"I wish pa would keep still," said Mercy, angrily.

At that moment the old man appeared at the door, leading his wife by the hand. She was a flabby, stout old creature, and even more untidy and unkempt-looking than her daughters.

There was a fire burning on the ashy hearth, for it was still early in May, and the evenings were chilly. The old woman, after a staring survey of the new-comer, and a word of welcome upon her introduction to him,

dropped into a large rocking-chair in the chimney-corner, and, while Mr. Wicks and Jim Baskins engaged in a monosyllabic conversation, Mercy and her two sisters cleared the supper-table, and in a lame and perfunctory manner washed the dishes. During the progress of her work, Mr. Baskins had ventured to address several remarks to Mercy, but she had answered him very briefly. It did not suit that independent young person to have her father bringing home with him young men tricked out as this one was, and avowing that they had come "expressly to see her." In truth, it was chiefly pondering upon this strange avowal that had kept her so silent. The young men in the neighborhood of "Wicks's Hollow" were all utterly disagreeable to her, and as she took no pains to disguise her feelings, she was naturally not popular among them. She had long ago given up all thought of life as holding any especial sweetness or glory for herself. Love was something that she had read a good deal about, but she had long felt that there was nothing of that sort in store for her. Therefore the idea of having a young man come to see her aroused but faintly her long-subdued desire for affection, and she felt a vague and unpleasant self-consciousness whenever she looked in Mr. Baskins's direction.

When her work, over which she had busied herself an unusually long time, offered no further excuse for her to move about the room, she beckoned her father to come to her, and held a whispered conversation with him in a distant corner of the room.

"Not to-night," Mr. Baskins heard the old man say, after a little.

"Oh yes," pleaded the girl. "The boys may come home any time now."

"But *he*'s here," objected Tom Wicks, in a loud whisper.

"I don't care," returned Mercy; "I don't want to see *him*."

Mr. Baskins winced a little. He was used to being made a great deal of among his "set" in Marlinsburg, and though he cared little enough for this untaught daughter of the backwoods, he did not enjoy such abso-

lute indifference on her part. It was rather interesting to see her blue eyes open wide, to hear her voice, and to watch her stately figure as she moved around the room. On the whole, he did not fancy the idea of her willingness to be gone all the evening any more than her father seemed to, and he understood very well from what Tom Wicks had told him that she was asking for his month's pay, in order to secrete it up on the mountain, and that her father was protesting against such an uncourteous proceeding. On the whole, Mr. Jim Baskins concluded that he had better be going.

"I wonder if I can find that place where they keep people over night?" he remarked, interrogatively, as Mr. Wicks, having evidently been worsted in his argument with Mercy, prepared to resume his seat beside his guest.

"Sho, now," said the old man, looking appealingly toward his daughter; "cayn't we fix him up——"

"Now, pa, you know," interrupted Mercy, fiercely, "there isn't a decent bed in the house."

"They ain't made o' down, I know," admitted her father, meekly; "but sho, now, Merce, cayn't we git him up——"

"No, we can't," declared Mercy, peremptorily. And here Jim Baskins, who could not help noticing that her face had assumed a color and her eye a fire during this discussion which made her positively handsome, interrupted the discussion to decline any further effort being made to arrange quarters for him in the Wicks mansion.

"I wouldn't inconvenience you for anything, Miss Mercy," he said, politely; "and although I appreciate your kindness, Mr. Wicks, it is much better that I should go elsewhere."

The genuine courtesy of his manner wakened Mercy's sense of propriety, and she spoke repentantly and eagerly.

"I'll show you the way," she said. "It isn't much further for me to go past there. It is a pretty good place—much better than our house."

"I'll go with him if he's got to go," said Tom Wicks sullenly.

"No, you needn't," returned Mercy, the violence of her manner all gone; and quietly taking down an old straw hat and a worn shawl from a peg beside the door, she put them on, and they walked out into the clear starlight of the May night.

Everything was very still, and they hurried on some distance without speaking.

"I should think you would be afraid to go upon the mountain alone at night," said the young man at last.

She raised her shawl and showed a belt beneath it, in which was thrust a revolver. Then she folded her shawl together again, and drew herself up proudly.

"I'm not afraid when I have that on," she said. "There's wild-cats on the mountain," she added, "and some foxes, but I don't mind them. I don't mind anything"—her voice dropped almost to a whisper—"when it's for Looly."

"You do it for Looly, then?" said Jim Baskins, pretending ignorance.

"I don't know as I ought to tell you," she said simply, and looking at him hard in the dim light, "but father says you're honest as the day is long, and so I don't mind telling you. You see, the boys would get father's money if it was left anywhere around the house, so I hide it up on the mountain, and I'm going to spend it for Looly one of these days."

"I should think you would have your father put it in a bank."

"The boys think that is where he puts it, but pa brings me up a newspaper now and then, and I'm always reading how somebody has run off with the bank's money; so when pa said, 'Put it in a bank,' I said, 'No; I'll hide it where it will be *safe*'; and I do. You'll surely not tell?"

"Oh no," he said, soberly. "I'm your friend, and I think it's very nice that you are saving up your money for your pretty little sister. Most girls would spend it for themselves."

Mercy's fine face softened. "I'd rather have Looly have things," she exclaimed, passionately, "than anything else in the world."

"She is a very pretty little girl," said Jim Baskins, patronizingly.

"She's very much nicer than Bet," Mercy continued more quietly. "She can read and write and cipher some; but Bet's dull enough."

"Who taught Looly all these things?"

"I did," said the girl. "I don't know who taught me. I reckon pa began it. He can read, and so could ma years ago, but she's forgotten how. Bet's hateful too," pursued Mercy, with a philosophical calmness of analysis, "while Looly never is. I don't let Looly run around as Bet does. I've seen lots of wickedness in this neighborhood," she went on, with an air of experience, which was amusing even to Mr. Jim Baskins's somewhat obtuse perceptions, "but Looly sha'n't see any of it. I'm going to give Looly a chance. But here's your place. Good-night."

She turned from him abruptly, the flutter of her garments swept past him in the starlight, and he found himself standing alone beside a faintly illumined house, while a dark figure creeping up a hill-side several rods away showed him that the daring girl was already well started on her errand of love.

Then he went in. He found that everything was as his young conductor had described it, and he was soon asleep, and dreaming of young girls who walked like empresses, abjured ceremony altogether, wore revolvers in their belts, and climbed lonely mountains at dead of night.

In the mean time Mercy was resolutely pursuing her way up the mountain-side, and it was a full hour after she left Mr. Jim Baskins before she paused at all. Then she threw herself down underneath a great pine-tree which had been struck by lightning, and which, standing by itself upon a little knoll, was easily discernible from the valley below.

Beneath its bare and blasted limbs was a large brown stone, as large as Mercy could lift, but she managed to insert her hand beneath it, and to draw out therefrom an iron box. This she unlocked, depositing her treasure in it, and then she returned it to its hiding-place.

"It's very strange," she soliloquized, "that that young man should have come up from Marlinsburg to see me. Any of the young fellows around Wicks's Hollow could have told him that I didn't treat the young men very well. Now there's Sally." "Sally" was Mercy's older sister. "Ever since Sally married Bill, what a life she's led! Sally was better than Bet too, but now it's drinking and quarrelling and quarrelling and drinking every minute. I wouldn't marry one of 'em—not for anything; and I wouldn't let Looly. Perhaps Looly 'll grow up and be like the ladies that ride by once in a while in their carriages. Perhaps she will marry one of those fine men—such as we read about. I'd like *that* for me too, but not one of these men around here, nor like this Mr. Baskins; but of course *I* can't; I haven't had any chance. Looly shall be different. I won't have Looly feel ashamed of herself as I do, not if I die for it."

There was a rustling in the bushes, and the girl sprang up a trifle nervously, and peered into the darkness, clutching her weapon more closely. Then she pulled her shawl around her, and taking a different path from that by which she had come, she was not long in reaching her father's cabin. "The boys" had not come even yet, and all the rest were asleep, excepting Bet, who sat beside the sputtering candle, nodding in a stupid doze. The foul air of the squalid interior struck with a new force upon the girl's quickened sense.

"I wish it was different," she sighed aloud. "It isn't as it ought to be; but dear me! dear me! I can't seem to fix it"; and she wearily climbed the ladder that led to the loft, and was soon asleep beside her little sister.

It was less than a week from the time that Mr. Baskins had made his first visit to Wicks's Hollow that he found his way thither again. This time he came on horseback by himself, and early in the afternoon. Somehow the thought of the proud girl whom he had seen had haunted him. He wished, with a sort of unreasonable persistence, to see her again, and as Jim Baskins, though by no means refined, and not what would be called a cultivated fellow, was clean, and had

been brought up by a neat and methodical mother, he thought with real pity of Mercy's ignorance of the first principles of tidiness and good housekeeping.

"I wonder," reflected Mr. Baskins—"I wonder if she couldn't learn a good deal out of one of these books that they have about such things?"

He decided that probably she could, and bought a work of that character; and as he happened that very day to come across a little book of the nature of a tract entitled *Cleanliness is Next to Godliness*, he determined to make up a package of books for Mercy, and to inclose surreptitiously within it the two volumes which he intended for her personal improvement. This package he finally concluded to take up to her himself.

He found her as indifferent to him as before. The influences of the starlight, and of her repentance for her rudeness to him, had made her very gentle and communicative during their evening walk together, but Mercy had thought matters over very thoroughly since then, and she had made up her mind that in case Jim Baskins should ever come to Wicks's Hollow again—something which she thought very unlikely to happen—she would not be any more agreeable to him than was absolutely necessary to insure the safe-keeping of the secret which, not knowing of her father's previous confidences, she felt that she had rather unwisely confided to him.

But Mercy's indifference was not proof against a package of beautiful new books.

"For me?" she cried, when he had handed them to her, and she had opened the bundle. "And Looly and I can read them? See here, Looly! Isn't it splendid?"

Mercy's face grew rosy with pleasure, and her eyes glowed. The young man forgot her tangled braids and her tattered gown. She was positively beautiful.

She opened one book after another in bewildered ecstasy, and could hardly wait till her visitor had gone, to examine their contents. Mr. Baskins did not stay very long. He saw her impatience, and it pleased while at the same time it piqued him. When he rode away, he mentally registered a vow to come soon again up to

Wicks's Hollow, and to observe what effect the works, upon whose selection he had expended so much care, had had upon the young girl whom he so much desired to cultivate.

That night, when Mercy went to bed, she thought more favorably than before of Mr. Jim Baskins.

"How good it was of him to bring us so many books!" she reflected, gratefully. "I shouldn't blame him—nor anybody else—for despising us; but he has been very kind to us, and the next time he comes, I'm going to treat him better."

On the following morning Mercy was up betimes, and as soon as her father and his horses disappeared behind the brow of the hill that overhung Wicks's Hollow she sat down, with Looly beside her, to the pile of books. "The boys" were off on a fishing expedition, Bet was idling under the shade of a tree outside, and Mrs. Wicks rocked and dipped in placid stupidity by the fire, all oblivious of the breakfast-table still standing, and of the general disorder of the little cabin.

The cover of the volume on *Cleanliness is Next to Godliness* was of an enticing blue, and Mercy hastened to open it and to inspect its contents. The subject was treated plainly and practically, and Mercy read on absorbedly after she had once begun. No such work had ever before come under her notice, and Mr. Jim Baskins had builded even better than he knew in inclosing it in his friendly package.

"That's the way people live," she said, raising her head after a while, and looking sadly out of the window; "nice people don't live as we do. That's the way I want you to live, Looly—dear little Looly!" She caught the delicate child up in her arms and kissed her. "And yet how we live! How lazy, how very lazy, we are!"

She sat there for a moment rocking and kissing the child passionately, when a shadow fell across the doorway, and Mercy saw that a young man was standing there, and that a beautiful horse, from which he had evidently just alighted, was tied to a tree outside.

She sprang up and looked at him in curious surprise.

He was a gentleman—this Mercy felt, without any definite thought on the subject, in every fibre of her being. Then she looked down at herself, as she had looked when her father had brought Jim Baskins up to see them, only with a keener mortification, and from herself she looked around upon the untidy room. If she had felt its meanness and foulness a moment before, in the light shed upon it by the illuminating little volume which she had just been reading, how much more did she feel it in the presence of this man, whose elegance and refinement struck the girl with a sense of romance—as if he had just stepped out of one of the novels that she had read. His glance rested, as he bowed to her in kindly greeting, upon the disordered room, and Mercy almost felt herself the little shudder which he gave as he took it all in.

"I know," she cried, without waiting for him to speak, intuitively fathoming his thought, and as intuitively imploring his leniency—"I know I oughtn't to have let things go so, but Mr. Baskins brought me up some books to read, and so I sat right down to read them. It wasn't nice; it wasn't right."

She spoke with an eagerness that, knowing nothing of the experience through which she had been passing, her visitor could not understand.

He murmured some formal words, politely disclaiming the need of apology, but was interrupted by the drawling tones of Mrs. Wicks, who had temporarily roused herself to gaze upon the distinguished stranger.

"Law, Merce," she said, tugging at her chair so as to bring it around where she could get a better view of their visitor, "what ye goin' on so, fer? Cayn't ye give the gen'lman a chair?"

"Excuse me," said the young man, who seemed little more than a boy, with his fresh face, slight mustache, and crisp dark hair; "my name is Wesley Sparhawk, and I live in Marlinsburg. I was about taking a ride across the mountain, and my father suggested that I should take with me some Bibles and tracts, and distribute them along the way. I'm not much used to such work," he said, smiling into Mercy's eager face,

"but I'm more than willing to try and do a little good —and I will leave some with you, if you like."

Looly took a book that the stranger held out to her, and gazed up into his handsome eyes with winning sweetness. He had spoken rapidly, and Mrs. Wicks had not been able to rouse herself enough to follow him.

"What?" she said, stupidly.

The sound of her crackling voice checked the answering smile with which Wesley Sparhawk was looking back into the child's face, and just then Bet came sauntering in at the door, adding another unpicturesque element to the already far from pleasant scene.

"Some Bibles and tracts," repeated the young man.

"Ye don't mean it!" rejoined Mrs. Wicks, having finally grasped his meaning. "Law! I've seen—men with sech things—colporteurs, ain't it?"—extricating the word from the confusion of her memory with a ludicrous effort—"but ye don't look like that kind—ye don't, reely."

In response to this remark, which she evidently intended to be highly complimentary, the young man looked down at his clothes, as if with a sudden sense of their unfitness, and blushed slightly.

"I'm not, exactly," he stammered, approaching her with a tract in his hand, "but I trust that you will like the books that I leave with you just as well."

Mercy had caught at the Testament which he had given Looly, and was looking at it intently.

"I've one just like it," she said, proudly. "See here," and she hastened to get the well-thumbed volume from a shelf near by and to exhibit it.

"That's good," said Mr. Wesley Sparhawk, approvingly, and noting the girl's glowing face and noble carriage with surprised interest. "Please accept this Bible"; and he held out to her the most elegantly bound among the half-dozen books that he carried.

Her hand trembled with pleasure as she took it. "Thank you," she said, simply; "I love dearly to read."

The difference between the girl's language and her mother's struck the young man with astonishment.

This slovenly, good-looking, majestic young daughter of the backwoods interested him.

"I see you have a good many books," he said, pointing to the pile beside the chair where she had been sitting.

"Yes," she said—"some new ones that Mr. Baskins sent us. Some of them tell about housekeeping and such things. I've learned a great deal from them, and I mean to read every word in them. It's for Looly more than for the rest of us," she went on, in obedience to the look of inquiry in his face. "It doesn't make much difference about Bet and me—we're older—but I mean to give Looly a chance to learn and have things, and I mean to bring her up right. This is Looly." She gathered the child to her affectionately. "I want her to grow up to be a lady."

The terrible discrepancy between her desires and the realistic squalor of the room seemed to strike the poor girl with crushing force. Her self-command failed her in her excitement; she put her apron to her face, and he could see that she was crying quietly, while Mrs. Wicks began a drawling remonstrance. The whole thing was a total mystery to her.

The young man flushed with pity. The situation lay revealed before him, and he felt an instinctive desire to help this groping soul.

"I'm very sorry," he said. "I'm going to be gone several days, but when I come back I shall stop again, and leave you some more books." He handed some tracts to Bet as he spoke, and bidding them all a courteous good-morning, flung himself upon his horse and rode away.

Mercy rose and wiped her eyes, and as she looked after Mr. Wesley Sparhawk, riding up the mountain-side, her heart gave a quick, determined throb. "It shall be different when he comes again," she resolved, and turning back into the unsightly room, she began with a firmness of touch and an energy of spirit not unlike that which must have characterized the great reformers to inaugurate in her own small sphere an era of reform.

An hour later she sat over her little sister, curling her long light hair—Mercy's pride, but hitherto only occasionally reduced to order. Then Bet received what that young woman described to her brothers later as a "going-over," and afterward Mercy herself underwent a species of transformation, and thoroughly wearied, but with a glow of pride more fervent than any that she had ever known before, she sat down to gaze about her, and to enjoy the result of her hardly worked-out resolution. Then she fell to reading.

That night she lay long awake, pondering on what she had read, on the ways which she might use to bring about certain needed reforms, and on the strange happenings of the day. The thought of resentment toward Mr. Jim Baskins had not occurred to Mercy. Instead, her soul, which had scarcely ever known a small or a selfish consideration, was filled with gratitude to him. She understood now how it had been something more than shame of their poverty which had made her so averse to going anywhere or to having company, and why the better class of their neighbors upon the mountain had seemed to slight and shun them. She felt that now she had found the key to better times for Wicks's Hollow, and her soul rejoiced with the consciousness as she fell asleep.

A few days later Mr. Jim Baskins paid another visit to the locality which had come to hold such a fascination for him, and he was filled with an honest pleasure when he saw signs of revolutionary tendencies among the residents in the Wicks cottage as he drew rein before the door. Beside the window, and showing unmistakable signs of careful attention to her toilet, sat Mercy herself, awkwardly, but with feverish haste, sewing away upon a piece of new calico.

"I'm making a dress for Looly," she announced, smilingly, looking up at him with a tired and heated face as he entered, but not deigning to rise. "I've enjoyed those books so much! Looly and I have read nearly all of them, haven't we, Looly?"

The child nodded, and crept close to her sister.

"I'm very glad," commented Mr. Baskins, with a

beaming face. "I thought you'd like them. And how nice you look here! You must be expecting a beau, I guess."

Bet, who was lying on a settee in the corner, giggled at this, and sat up, as though the conversation for once began to assume an interesting complexion; and Mrs. Wicks, who was stationed by the door in the inevitable rocking-chair, and engaged in her usual absorbing occupation of dipping snuff, cackled forth a feeble expression of mirth.

"Sal used ter have lots o' beaus," she remarked, proudly, and smiling a weak but approving smile upon Mr. Jim Baskins, as she thus endeavored to cover what she considered to be one of Mercy's most important deficiencies. "An' Bet seems ter please the young fellers more'n Merce does," she continued. "Merce she cayn't abide 'em, she says. I do' know—I sh'd think——" And here Mrs. Wicks's discourse relapsed into a mumble which neither Mr. Jim Baskins nor any of the others present could very well understand.

"I liked this book best," said Mercy, ignoring the recent turn of the conversation. Her heightened color and uplifted head were the only indications that she had heard what had just been said. She took up one of the books as she spoke, and opened its leaves caressingly, and though Mr. Jim Baskins could not understand her fondness for it, nor for any other book, not being a man much addicted to reading, he sat down and devoted his energies to making himself agreeable to this obdurate young woman. She was handsome enough to excite his profoundest admiration this afternoon, and in her gratitude to him was uncommonly complaisant. Her subdued laugh rang out pleasantly several times, and Mr. Jim Baskins had to acknowledge to himself that he had never heard a more melodious voice than hers. It was not until the shackly wagon and lean horses of old Tom Wicks came rattling down into the Hollow that Mercy's visitor took any thought of the flight of time. She politely invited him to stay to supper again, but she did not urge him. She had been civil, and even very pleasant, to Mr. Jim Baskins, but

she did not like him very well, after all, and she was not sorry when he declined her invitation with thanks, remounted his horse, and rode slowly away. To tell the truth, Mr. Jim Baskins was getting to be somewhat in love, and, as the Marlinsburg belles of that young gentleman's "circle" would have expressed it, "with one of those"—or the belles might have said "them"—"low-down Wickses upon the mountain."

It was two or three days after this that another young man flung himself from his horse and entered the Wicks cabin. It was Mr. Wesley Sparhawk, who had been playing in a rather awkward but quite honest fashion the part of a missionary toward the benighted mountaineers in the region adjacent to his home. Young Sparhawk had not found this improvised sort of "circuit-riding" altogether productive of pleasure, and his face was somewhat paler and his air more subdued than when he had called before in Wicks's Hollow. Still, as Mr. Wesley Sparhawk had a good deal of "bottom," he was not disheartened. He was only a young man accustomed to no harder labor than such as pertained to the care of his toilet and to the acquisition of his lessons at school and at college, and he had found his long ride and the numerous calls that he had made in his new capacity excessively exhausting. He had rather dreaded appearing again at the Wicks cottage, for scarcely in all his tour had he encountered one so uninviting. But he remembered the tall, fine-faced girl whom he had seen there, and he felt a strong desire to see her again, and to learn if the protestations that she had made so earnestly had amounted to anything.

Mercy saw him coming, for though she would not have admitted it even to herself, she had been watching for him for several days, and she looked around her home at the various metamorphoses which she had accomplished, with a flutter of pride and delight. It was true that Bet had hardly been able to keep up with the march of civilization in Wicks's Hollow, and that Mrs. Wicks, long since past regeneration, had absolutely refused to submit to many of Mercy's regulations. She had even roused herself to a more violent exertion than

for several years past, to denounce in unqualified terms the revolutionary measures which undoubtedly contributed more to her immediate discomfort than to her pleasure. Therefore she still remained a blot of no small proportions upon the landscape; but Mercy herself was fresh and neat, Looly was as sweet as a daisy, and the cabin was as clean as Mercy's strong young arms could make it.

Mr. Wesley Sparhawk paused upon the threshold, and surveyed Mercy's rejuvenated domains with a smile of surprised approval.

"I declare you've kept your word," he said, and as he took her hand and looked into her proud eyes, the blood flowed faster in his veins, and she felt a thousandfold repaid for the labor she had given, and a new impulse to continue the good work.

He came into the cabin and sat down, laying beside her chair a pile of books and papers which he had brought. A book which she had been reading lay on the window-sill; it was the book of which she had spoken in such admiring terms to Mr. Baskins. He picked it up and turned the leaves.

"This is a nice story," he said; "the only trouble with it is that it ends in such an improbable way."

The girl looked at him inquiringly. This was iconoclastic.

"I mean," he explained, "that it was a pity the hero should have married that girl. Not but that she was noble and all that, but they had been brought up so differently, of course they could never be happy together. It isn't in reason," continued Mr. Wesley Sparhawk, marking the intense concern which the girl manifested, and glad to be able to enlighten her ignorance. "He had been brought up in the midst of elegance, and her advantages——" He checked himself. He had forgotten for a moment the circumstances under which he was speaking. "It was different with her," he concluded, lamely.

"Yes," said Mercy, in a low voice, "she had been poor always, and hadn't had any chance."

"It made a nice story, only it couldn't ever have hap-

pened and turned out well in real life, you see. The general test to apply to a painting or a story or almost anything is, Is it natural? is it practical? If it isn't, it isn't good."

"Yes," said Mercy, gravely, "I understand." She drew herself up a little. Her pride had been touched, how deeply she did not know until long afterward. Her large toil-stained hands, especially disfigured by recent unwonted exertions, opened and closed convulsively. Was there, then, no chance that Looly should ever grow up to marry a different sort of man from Sally's Bill and the young men around Wicks's Hollow? And a dim little hope which, in spite of her efforts to crush it, had dared to bloom for herself in her innermost heart seemed to be trodden down in a moment.

The young man sat talking longer than he had meant to. He felt, without formulating his feelings, that he had hurt the girl's self-respect a little, and he tried to make her forget it, by taking up book after book and commenting laughingly upon them all. And Mercy forgot everything else in listening to him, until she too began to impart her impressions of what she had been reading, and her ideas were so unsophisticated, so daring, so original, her face was so fair, and her eyes so luminous while she told of them, that, unawares, the young man was more charmed by her than he would have cared to own.

"I wish you would go down to Marlinsburg to some of the meetings," he said at last. "You would like them."

Mercy shook her head. "I wouldn't go down there for anything," she said. Her figure dilated a little, and she held her head a trifle higher. "The Marlinsburg people look at me so," she added, "I can't stand it. I've only a sun-bonnet to wear and a calico dress, and I'm never going anywhere again until we get enough money saved to educate Looly. It's too late to do much for me, but I mean to give *her* a good chance."

The young man asked some questions about this matter, and Mercy told him what she was doing, though not so fully as she had told Mr. Jim Baskins.

"And your father is saving this money for Looly?"

"He lets me save it," she said, smilingly.

The young man, accustomed as he had always been to the luxuries of great wealth, glanced pitifully around the bare little dwelling. To put away money needed, it seemed to him, to supply the daily wants of life, for such a purpose as that for which this girl was hoarding it, struck him as rather fine—rather grand. He began to admire from the bottom of his heart this strange exotic among the regulation "poor white" growths of Wicks's Hollow.

The clock struck six.

"I must go," said the young man, rising reluctantly. "I've a fancy that you will go to the meetings some time if I'll come and get you," he added, as he rode away.

She shook her head, but she smiled. She would rather do even that than not to see him again.

"I reckon you will," he laughed back to her, and her heart thrilled with intense regret as she watched him disappear behind the hill. How handsome, how distinguished he was! How inferior to him Mr. Jim Baskins appeared as she mentally compared them! Yet perhaps she should never see him again, and her heart gave a great throb of pain as she thought, but she did not stop to account for it.

It was now nearly time for her father to come home, and Mercy hastened to kindle a fire, and to get everything in readiness for his arrival. She had been very watchful of him and attentive to his wants lately, and no one had appreciated more warmly, or at least more demonstratively, than he the efforts which she had been making for the elevation of the Wicks family.

"Now ye don't, Merce!" he had exclaimed, when the reforms had first begun in earnest. "Law, now, chile, ye've had all the work to do for years, now, an' I allers thought ye more'n done yer juty; but now—— Law, Merce, I'm right smart proud o' ye; I reely be!"

Mercy loved her father next to Looly of all the family, and his praise was very sweet to her; and so when the hour drew on for him to appear—earlier than usual on

this night, as it was Saturday, the day on which Mr. Jim Baskins had made his first visit to Wicks's Hollow —she saw to it that her father should be well received. A stern something within the girl, something which must have descended to her from some far-back Puritan ancestor, was constantly warning her against retrogression.

"I'm going to keep it up," she had said to herself through shut teeth, when her mother and Bet had stood like roaring lions, so to speak, in the way of her projects—"I'm going to keep it up if it kills me." But it was not going to kill her. Her plans once matured and system once inaugurated, she had an executive ability and a natural love of method which were gradually developing, and which made things easy for her.

Young Sparhawk remembered his parting words to her. Indeed, they and Mercy Wicks's face had been in his mind a great deal since he had made such an unexpectedly long call at Wicks's Hollow, and he had wanted to go and see her again even before he could invent a reasonable excuse. But he learned that a camp-meeting was to be held in a grove half-way between Marlinsburg and Wicks's Hollow, and he decided to invite Mercy to attend it on a certain afternoon with him. As he mounted his buggy and took an early start for the mountain he could not conceal from himself that the camp-meeting would offer a pleasanter way of keeping his promise to Mercy than bringing her down to Marlinsburg, where he was well known, and where he understood that no amount of deference to his acknowledged desire to do good would mitigate the fact that he was, in a small way, "waiting upon" a young woman in just the social position of Miss Mercy Wicks.

Mercy, in the mean time, had passed through a rather harrowing experience. Mr. Jim Baskins had made her another visit, and his manner had been such that Mercy had felt it incumbent upon her to treat him in a very cavalier, not to say forbidding, way. In fact, so very caustic had she been upon his departure that Mr. Jim Baskins had left in high dudgeon, and she knew very well that he would never come back. He had not

"made love" to Mercy, but her quick sense had detected strong indications that he was about to do so, and she had felt that that was something she could not and would not allow. She had thought of it since with some misgivings. How kind Jim Baskins had been to give her those books! What a blessing they had proved to her! Perhaps she had been too rude to him; and then perhaps—she had gleaned this impression from the stories that she had read—perhaps she ought to give Mr. Baskins back the books he had brought her. This was much against Mercy's inclinations, and she did not propose to do it unless some new revelation of her duty should be made to her.

When young Sparhawk drove up to the door, therefore, Mercy was sitting in a deep brown-study by the window, with her sewing lying unheeded in her lap; but when his eyes met hers, a tell-tale glow overspread her face, and she sprang up to welcome him. A voice within him chided him a little as he saw her brightening face. Were these quite the circumstances under which to do missionary work to the best advantage?

But it was a beautiful day, and he felt young and happy, and he acknowledged to himself a very strong desire to listen again to this frank girl's pleasant voice, and to watch her as she made her odd comments upon life and books.

But Mercy steadfastly refused to go to the meeting with him. And when he found there was really no use in urging her, he asked her suddenly if she wouldn't ride a little way with him.

Her face flushed with pleasure, and her heart beat so fast that she could scarcely answer him.

"To drive with you?" she repeated, wonderingly. This was like the books that she had read. It was like a beautiful dream. But she preserved outwardly her usual calm dignity of demeanor as she made her preparations, and amid the wide-mouthed but fortunately indistinct comments of her mother and of Bet, she kissed Looly, and drove away with Wesley Sparhawk. Their road lay through piny, shady woods. The girl threw off her ugly sun-bonnet, and her fair hair curled about

her glowing face as she talked gayly with him of the books that she had read and of the scenes through which they had been passing.

It was like a fairy hour to her, and a delightful experience to him, and when he left her at the door of the little cabin, he promised to come again soon, and to bring her some books of which he had been telling her.

Before many days he kept his word, and appeared, bearing the parcel of books that he had promised. A week later he came again, and another visit succeeded. By this time the young man owned to himself that he was the victim of a violent passion for the beautiful backwoods girl, and Mercy knew in her secret heart that she was living but for her lover's smile, and that the days were dark when he did not come. Still the young man said nothing. So beautiful a dream should not be disturbed, he reasoned in his blindness.

One evening, after he had left her, Mercy watched him out of sight, and Looly, who had come quietly up beside her as she stood looking after him, twined her arms around her sister, and they walked gravely in together. Then Mercy moved silently about the room preparing the supper. Her mother had grown almost afraid of her, and very respectful, since this fine young man had begun to come to Wicks's Hollow, and, indeed, Mercy's manner, always dignified, had become almost majestic during these glorified weeks which had seen the growth of this love in her heart—a love such as the common souls by which she was surrounded could neither appreciate nor understand. They had all felt a subtle change in her, even to "the boys," but they had dared to say very little to her, though at Bet, who was constantly indulging in flirtations with the neighboring farmers' sons, they were always flinging taunts and innuendoes. To-night, however, when "Jake" came, he had been drinking a little, and he had met Wesley Sparhawk as he had been going home.

"Fine beau ye have thar, Merce," he said, sulkily, as he came in at the door. "Wonder 'f he'll be too stuck up ter speak to his gal's relations after the weddin'?"

Mercy turned on him with flaming eyes, and seemed to grow perceptibly taller as she looked at him.

"He's not my 'beau'!" she cried, passionately. "Don't you ever say such a thing as that again"; and the boy, excited though he was with drink, did not dare to open his lips again.

That night Mercy went early to bed, but her brother's words rang in her ears, and she kept thinking, over and over again, of the story of which Wesley Sparhawk had talked with her weeks before.

"He had been brought up in luxury, and she—so differently." "They could never have been happy." "It could never have happened in real life."

As she thought, she sobbed and cried until, with the violence of her grief, although the night had worn then into the small hours, she even wakened Looly, who begged piteously to know why she was weeping. The morning was growing red in the east before she finally fell asleep.

The next day she read the story over again. Somehow lately she had not thought much about it. After she finished reading it she laid the book down and thought out a sequel to it. Her quickened imagination devised a multitude of things which a girl like the one in the story might do to shock and offend a fastidious husband. No; such a thing could not happen in real life, as Wesley Sparhawk had said. It ought not to happen. People should marry people something like themselves; and as she worked out the problem more and more clearly and convincingly in her mind, a little poem which she had read somewhere, and which had for its refrain,

"I have dreamed my dream,
I have wakened at last,"

flitted through her mind again and again as she went sternly about her work.

In the afternoon she had usually sat down of late to a long, happy time of sewing, or of reading with Looly, but to-day Mercy could not work. She could only sit and hold her little sister and cry silently as she kissed and kissed the wondering child's face. It was only two

or three nights before that she had made the long, lonely journey up the mountain-side to deposit some more money for Looly. The boys were getting very impatient lately because so little of their father's earnings found its way into their hands, and Mercy was inwardly fretted lest Jim Baskins in his pique had managed to let them know her secret. She had therefore removed the box in which she kept the money to an altogether different part of the mountain from where it had been before, and had hidden it anew.

"Whatever happens to me, my pet, your future shall be sure," she murmured in the child's ear. "Mercy will see to it that her little Looly has a chance. She shall have everything that Mercy can get for her."

Then she looked up and started, for a horse was cantering swiftly down the hill, and she knew that Wesley Sparhawk had come again.

He alighted, fastened his horse, and came toward her. She looked very grave and stately, and very cold, though her lashes were wet, and she was holding her little sister to her with desperate closeness. When he had left her on the evening before, she had been all smiles and warmth. He could not understand this sudden change. He took a seat beside her underneath the great tree where she had been sitting, and then she released Looly, whispering in her ear, and the child silently disappeared, leaving them alone together.

Young Sparhawk 's face was very pale, and his lips trembled, and as soon as the little girl had left them he began, impetuously: "I have come back because—because I have thought it over a good many times, and I want—I want, as you say, Mercy—I want to 'give you a chance.' You are young yet, Mercy: don't you want to go to school?"

She looked at him in vague bewilderment. "I couldn't," she gasped. "Oh no; it's out of the question. There's Looly, and father, and Bet, and all of them, and I couldn't. I'm twenty now, and oh, I couldn't *that* way, anyway."

She stopped, for her voice began to choke. Her sleeplessness of the night before, and the long strain

which she had been unconsciously enduring for the last few weeks, and which had culminated in her terrible mental struggle of the past twenty-four hours, had left her very weak. She knew what he was going to say, and a voice within her kept repeating: "It can never be; it can never be."

"I've come, Mercy," he said, huskily, "to think everything of you, and I believe you love me. Now the only thing you need to make you all that—all that—is necessary is an—an education. I've plenty of money, Mercy, and two or three years at a good boarding-school would be all that you would need, and then, then——" And in spite of the fact that he knew Bet to be furtively watching him from a convenient window, he seized Mercy's hand and drew closer beside her.

"Don't you know," she said, with a great effort, and in a strangely altered voice—"don't you know in the story—he had been brought up in luxury, and she—it had been so different with her?"

"That was another case altogether," said Wesley Sparhawk, impatiently. "She had not been educated."

"Oh yes, she had," corrected Mercy, growing more fluent as her convictions became more intense. "She had, as you say, 'seen a great deal of the world,'" and she went on to describe some of the details of the story which had apparently escaped his mind, until he stopped her, imperiously.

"Well, they were not we, Mercy," he said. "I can't be happy without you, and if you want me to have any peace of mind, you must marry me. You're a good girl; you're a perfect queen, Mercy; you're the noblest girl I ever saw. Just think what you've done up here in the woods without any help—in fact, with everything against you! It's wonderful! How different your life is now from what it was only six short months ago when I first saw you, and——"

She stopped him with a gesture of despair.

"But I could never learn——"

"Yes, yes——"

"No, I could never learn to be what your wife ought to be. I should always feel that you had stooped to

marry me. I could never bear the scorn of your friends, nor your scorn of mine. Oh, it would kill me!"

Her hands hid her face from him, and she began to sob.

"Now listen to me, Mercy," he commenced, again peremptorily, but again she stopped him.

"I cannot tell you how plain it is to me," she said, growing calm and dispassionate once more: "it is as if an angel had shown me what was going to happen. I seem to see our life just as it would be, even if I should try to learn how to be different, and should marry you. I seem to see such suffering for you, such misery for me——"

"The picture is not true!" he cried, despairingly. "I shall do by you just what is right as nearly as I can find it out, and it *would* bring happiness to us both. I have always had my way, Mercy, and I am not a bad man, am I? I should not scorn you nor let you be scorned. I would *kill* any one——"

She checked him again.

"It is of no use," she said. "I have made up my mind that it is best that you should go and not come back. You will find somebody——" Her eyes filled with tears, her voice failed her, and she left her sentence unfinished. "I commenced," she said, a moment later, while he watched her in a silence half mournful, half angry—"I commenced by working for Looly, and I am sure that that is my work that God has given me to do—to help Looly on—and that that's why He never gave me any chance for myself. I think you are good—oh, I do respect you very much—but I think I can stand it, and be happy—after a while—working for Looly. You had better go now. Good-by."

She walked away from him slowly, sorrowfully, but with an air that forbade him from following her. He turned once when he had nearly reached his horse, but she was nowhere to be seen, so he mounted and rode away. A few days later he came again, but she had seen him coming, and in evident expectation that he would return, had prepared a note, which, running away herself, she had left with Looly to be given him.

It said, in Mercy's cramped and unaccustomed hand, "You must not come; I shall always be gone." And after that he came no more.

It was a raw and gusty day in the following March, when Mr. Wesley Sparhawk, sitting in his father's elegant library in Marlinsburg, was told that a visitor wished to see him, and a moment later Mercy Wicks was shown into the room. At first he did not know her, but she quietly removed her woollen hood, and then, in spite of a great change which had come over her face, he recognized it.

"My God!" he cried, springing up and leading her tenderly to a seat. "What is it, Mercy? What ails you? Have you been ill?"

She nodded mutely. Tears were trickling down her face, and she coughed again and again.

"Ah, you have come to tell me," he cried, "that you have changed your mind?"

"No, no," she said, unsteadily; "I was right; I see it now more plainly than I saw it before; but, oh! it was very sweet to have you—love—me!"

Her tears began to flow again, and the young man, overcome by the pathos of her looks and of her words, laid his head in his hands upon the table and sobbed aloud.

When she grew calmer, she drew a small but heavy bag from underneath her shawl.

"I came to bring you this," she said. "It's Looly's money, you know, that I used to keep on the mountain. I went up there two or three weeks ago and got it. I was growing so weak that I knew I couldn't go again, and I've brought it to you. You'll see that it is spent for Looly—you'll see that she has everything done for her that this money can buy, won't you?—for the love that you said you had for me."

He bowed assent, and took the money in his hands. He could not speak, but she had grown quite calm, and went on to tell him about herself.

"I've been running down ever since you saw me," she said. "They say it's quick consumption, or some-

thing like that, and the doctor said that it would kill me to go out to-day; but I felt able, and I wanted you to see to this. I felt as if I could trust you, and you would know just what kind of a lady I wanted Looly to be. If I'm to die before she is grown up, of course it might as well be soon as a little later. I think Looly'd better go away somewhere before long. I've told pa, and he has promised to do just as you say. I rode down with him, and I know he's in a hurry to go back, so I reckon I hadn't better stay any longer, for you understand."

She rose weakly, and though he begged to be allowed to take her home, she would only let him go with her to the place where she was to join her father.

"I declare!" said one street idler to another, as he saw them going by together, "who's that Wesley Sparhawk's helping along with such care? Looks like somebody out of the backwoods, and I reckon it is. By the way, I've heard he was just smitten with a daughter of that old Wicks that lives up on the mountain in what they call 'Wicks's Hollow.' Heard that he offered himself to her, and she wouldn't have him; but of course that couldn't possibly be so."

"Of course," rejoined his companion, with an incredulous sneer, as they watched the strange pair out of sight.

A month later Mercy Wicks died.

The little heroine of this sweet love-story must have been very beautiful, in spite of her poverty and tears, when she stood there, begging on the marble steps. In stories, beauty rises superior to rags and to the red eyes and shining noses of ordinary weeping. Would that common mortals might attain this gift of the dear children of fiction! Henri Tessier wrote the story, and Mrs. E. N. M. translated it for ROMANCE.

THE GOLD FLORIN.

FROM the Lido to the Riva degli Schiavoni, the Lagoon lay like a mirror,—shining and iridescent as a great sheet of mother-of-pearl,—under the parting rays of the sun, as they fell like golden rockets on the many roofs, domes and campaniles of old and ever-marvellous Venice.

Upon the canals, the silent gondolas glided, swan-like, swaying to the melodious chant of the gondoliers, bronzed and bare-limbed; to the graceful swinging of the oar as it dips lightly into the green water, reappearing spangled with silver.

John Edward MacG——, earl, lord, peer of England, and possessor of an entire county in Scotland, lounged carelessly down the Scala dei Giganti, that grand stairway leading to the Doge's Palace, and stopped suddenly between the huge statues which guard it, as though he had been fascinated by the coming and going of the brilliant crowd below him, picturesque and harmonious, as they lounged beneath the carved pillars of the Zecca, their steps idly bent toward the Grand Canal, or plunging into the many little narrow passages.

He was a handsome youth, this Lord MacG——, tall, a blonde of reddish type, with tender, kind eyes of serene blue; with all that air of "grand signor," borne by those people privileged to live beyond the British Channel, and which recalls the followers of Seymour, Beau Brummel and Buckingham.

Bored, like many of his compatriots, who call the

melancholy produced in them by the fogs of the Thames their spleen, John Edward had closed his great house in Oxford Street and come to Venice.

For eight days he had visited with enthusiasm—English enthusiasm—all the museums, churches, canals, galleries, in short, every place suggested by his guide; finding time to acknowledge to himself that this singular city, a sort of marble inhabitant of the sea, had awakened rosy-tinted thoughts in his mind, roused hope in his heart, made the blood in his veins flow in a more youthful and ardent manner.

Now, here he rested, motionless and interested, in the middle of the Giant's Stairway, watching a little girl, a child of seven years, her eyes red and swollen with weeping, her thin hand extended to him, while she looked at him with an eagerness and intensity almost terrible.

Lord MacG—— mechanically descended a step, the child came nearer, and finding herself encouraged, whispered with a breaking voice, in the sweet lisping tongue of the Doges:

"Charity, signor, in the name of Christ, the Saviour."

The Englishman, moved in spite of himself by this prayer, so like a command, took a handful of change and offered it to the child, who refused it almost angrily.

"No," said she,—and her voice became shrill and fierce—"I must have a gold florin."

John Edward, despite his usual affected indolence, could not repress an exclamation of surprise.

"A gold florin!" he repeated, staring with his great, mild eyes, into the sad ones of the little girl. "Why must you have a florin?"

"To bury my mother, signor, who is dead."

"Ah," said the Englishman—whose heart was stirred.

"They demand money for the candles and for the grave,—in all, a florin! And mamma's down yonder waiting, and so very cold!"

The Englishman quickly placed the money in the child's thin hand, then added:

"Where do you live?"

"Far away yonder, behind St. Pierre des Grecs."

"Come, let us go there."

And taking the weeping child by the hand, Lord MacG—— crossed the entire width of the ducal city, oblivious of the passers-by, who were not a little surprised, even shocked, at this unusual sight.

The child had indeed told only the sad truth. In the top of a miserable house, a dead body lay, awaiting burial, waiting to be carried to its last home—six feet of earth—awaiting the prayers for the dead.

It was that of a respectable, brave widow, whom sickness, poverty, hard work and despair had killed before her time; for she had implored Providence to grant her to live until she might rear her child to womanhood.

John Edward knelt with a quiet simplicity by the dead woman; then inquired regarding the formalities to be observed; attended to all with lavish generosity; and the following day, with uncovered head walking in the midst of the common crowd of people, accompanied the mother to her last resting-place. On their return he said to the child:

"What is your name?"

"Carità, signor."

Then the English lord added in a low voice:

"Would you like to be my little daughter?"

The child looked earnestly at him for an instant before answering; then suddenly, bursting into tears, she threw herself into his arms, open to receive her.

"Yes, yes, signor," she sobbed.

. . . . . .

Lord MacG—— returned to London, accompanied by Carità, and without delay proceeded to turn upside down his grand old mansion, fancying it unsuitable to shelter the childish charms of the Venetian orphan.

His whole life was changed. It seemed as though a ray of the Italian sun had entered his heart with the affection which he felt for the child, and which daily grew greater and deeper. His whole being sang the grand anthem of paternity; his dreams were colored with rosy hues; he was in heaven. He was no longer troubled with his "spleen"—he had left it buried forever in the green waters of the Adriatic.

And Carità, surrounded by professors, governesses and servants, quickly forgot the whining tones of the little beggar, and changed gradually into a marvel of grace and beauty.

John Edward was rarely seen at the clubs, gambled no more, fled from society of every kind, neglected Epsom, and even forgot his place in the House of Lords. To all invitations he had but one answer: "I cannot accept! I have a daughter to be cared for now!"

The world grew accustomed to this new eccentricity; and the years passed quickly, filled with an affection more and more intense, and yet not quite satisfying.

For six months Lord MacG—— had realized that he was forty years old, and that his ward had reached her nineteenth year. This caused a most disagreeable emotion, but being a man of energy, and not caring to put off an evil hour, one bright morning he hunted up Carità.

"My dear child," he said to her, "you are old enough to think of marriage, and from to-day we must consider seriously this grave question; so prepare yourself, for in a short time I shall present you to Her Majesty the Queen, who will be glad to take you under her gracious protection."

The voice of this most honorable gentleman trembled a little as he uttered these words, but his face was calm and smiling.

Carità raised to him her great, soft eyes, serious and full of an angry surprise:

"I do not wish to marry," she said.

She was marvellously lovely at this moment, this waif of the Giant's Stairway. Tall, lithe as a willow, with hair of Venetian gold, with the light of burning lava shining through it; with the feet and hands of a patrician; lips red as a coral branch; and teeth like the pearls which one finds only among the seaweed of Ceylon. More than all that, she had a grace, a charm, a wonderful radiance about her.

John Edward trembled as he demanded: "Why?"

"Because," she replied, lowering her eyes, heavy with sadness,

"But why?"

Carità straightened herself and looked him firmly in the face, with the bold modesty of an innocent heart.

"In what way do you love me?" she asked.

Lord MacG—— started.

"How! I love you, Carità, as a father, as a——" He never finished, a change came over him, the innermost recesses of his heart were revealed to him, and in their depths he read a sentiment so wonderful, so profound that he was frightened.

"That is not enough," murmured the young girl, becoming very pale.

"What!" cried the earl, "you could—you would allow me——"

"Ask my hand of my guardian," said she, "for I have sworn to myself never to have any husband save you."

. . . . . .

Five months ago Lord MacG—— married his beloved adopted daughter, who wore to the church, as her only ornament, a gold florin—the florin given her by John Edward on the Scala dei Giganti, and which had never left her since.

They have been in Paris for a week, and I saw them yesterday at the opera, and upon my honor their happiness was so wonderful that one was filled with the desire to imitate their example.

Miss Marietta Holley ("Josiah Allen's Wife") has never written anything more merrily characteristic than the following ludicrous sketch, the first of the group of three Humorous Tales promised for this issue. The telling blows which this wholesome satirist has dealt all sorts of frauds and fallacies have earned her the thanks of truth-loving people everywhere.

OUR SUFFERENS WITH AGENTS.

We done pretty well this year. The crops came in first-rate, and then Josiah had 4 or 5 head of cattle to turn off, and he proposed I should have a sewin'-machine. Though we don't coo at each other so much as some do, my pardner, Josiah, is attached to me with a firm and almost cast-iron devotedness.

But I said to him, "Josiah, I had rather Tirzah Ann would have a organ, because if she is ever goin' to learn to play, now is the time. And I have got a couple of sewin'-machines, that have run pretty well for upwards of—well, it haint no matter how many years, but quite a number, anyway."

But Josiah hung on to that machine, and Tirzah Ann seemed sot onto her organ, and, finally, Josiah ups, and says he, "I will get both on 'em." And Tirzah and me thought we would let him have his head in the matter.

So it got out that we was goin' to buy a sewin'-machine, and a organ. Wall, we made up our minds on Friday, pretty late in the afternoon, and on Monday forenoon I was a-washin', when I heard a knock at the front door, and I wrung my hands out of the water, and went and opened it.

A slick-lookin' feller stood there, and I invited him in, and set him a chair.

"I hear you are a-talkin' of buyin' a musical instrument for your daughter," says he.

"No," says I, "we are goin' to buy a organ."

"Wal," says he, "I want to advise you. Not that I have any interest in it at all, only I don't want to see

you imposed upon. It fairly makes me mad to see a Methodist imposed upon. I lean toward that perswaision myself. Organs are liable to fall to pieces any minute. There haint no dependence on 'em at all; the insides of 'em are liable to break out any minute. If you have any regard for your own welfare and safety, you will buy a piano. Not that I have any interest in advising you, only my stern devotion to the cause of right. Pianos never wear out."

"Where should we go to get one?" says I, for I didn't want Josiah to throw away his property.

"Wal," says he, "as it happens, I guess I have got one out here in the wagon. I believe I threw one into the bottom of the wagon this mornin', as I was a-comin' down by here on business. I am glad now that I did, for it always makes me feel ugly to see a Methodist imposed upon."

Josiah came into the house in a few minutes, and I told him about it; and, says I, "How lucky it is, Josiah, that we found out about organs, before it was too late!"

But Josiah asked the price, and said he wasn't goin' to pay out no 300 dollars, for he wuzzn't able. But the man asked if we was willin' to have it brought into the house for a spell—we could do as we was a mind to about buyin' it; and, of course, we couldn't refuse, so Josiah almost broke his back a-liftin' it in. And they sot it up in the parlor, and after dinner the man went away.

I had just got back to my washin' agin (I had had to put it away to get dinner) when I heard a knockin' again to the front door, and I pulled down my dress-sleeves, and went and opened it, and there stood a tall, slim feller, and the kitchen bein' all cluttered up, I opened the parlor door, and asked him in there. And the minute he ketched sight of that piano, he just lifted up both hands, and says he,

"You haint got one of them here!"

He looked so horrified that it skairt me, and says I in almost tremblin' tones,

"What is the matter with 'em?" and I added, in a cheerful tone, "We haint bought it."

He looked more cheerful, too, as I said it, and, says he, "You may be thankful enough that you haint. There haint no music in 'em at all. Hear that," says he, goin' up, and strikin' the very top note. It did sound flat enough.

Says I, "There must be more music in it than that, though I haint no judge at all."

"Wal, hear that, then," and he went and struck the very bottom note. "You see jest what it is, from top to bottom. But it haint its total lack of music that makes me despise pianos so; it is because they are so dangerous."

"Dangerous?" says I.

"Yes, in thunder storms, you see," says he, liftin' up the cover. "Here it is, all wire, enough for 50 lightnin'-rods—draw the lightnin' right into the room. Awful dangerous! No money would tempt me to have one in my house, with my wife and daughter. I shouldn't sleep a wink, thinkin' I had exposed 'em to such danger."

"Good Lord!" says I, "I never thought on it before."

"Wal, now you have thought of it. You see plainly that an organ is just what you need. They are full of music, safe, healthy, and don't cost half so much."

Says I, "An organ was what we had set our minds on at first."

"Wal, I have got one out here, and I will bring it in."

"What is the price?" says I.

"100 and 50 dollars," says he.

"There won't be no need of bringin' it in at that price," says I, "for I have heard Josiah say that he wouldn't give a cent over a hundred dollars for one."

"Wal," says the feller, "I'll tell you what I'll do. Your countenance looks so kinder natural to me, and I like the looks of the country 'round here so well, that if your mind is made up on the price you want to pay, I won't let a trifle of 50 dollars part us. You can have it for 100."

Wal, the end on't was, he brung it in, and sot it up the other end of the parlor, and drove off. And when Josiah came in from his work and the children came home from school, they liked it first-rate.

But the very next day, a new agent came, and he looked awful skairt when he ketched sight of that organ, and awful mad and indignant, too.

"That villain haint been a-tryin' to get one of them organs off onto you, has he?" says he.

"What is the trouble with 'em?" says I, in an awe-struck tone, for he looked bad.

"Why," says he, "there is a heavy mortgage on every one of his organs. If you bought one of him, and paid for it, it would be liable to be took away from you any minute, when you was right in the middle of a tune, leavin' you a-settin' on the stool, and you would lose every cent of your money."

"Good gracious!" says I, for it skairt me to think what a narrow chance we had run. Wal, finally, he brung in one of hisen, and set it up in the kitchen, the parlor bein' full on 'em.

Wal, he driv off, and he hadn't more'n got out of sight when the first organ-man came, and I treated him pretty cool, thinkin' in my own mind how he had tried to cheat us. He see my frigidness, and asked me to tell him what was the matter, and finally I up and told him. And then, oh, how that man swore! He said "the feller that jest left was the biggest liar in North America. He had been turned out of church after church jest for lyin'"; and then he offered to bring down a lawyer to prove it was a lie, and says he, "I'll swear to it."

"You have swore enough about it now," says I coolly, and almost frigidly, for I was a-gettin' out of patience with the whole caboodle of 'em.

Wal, the next day a new one come. He asked 100 and 75 dollars for hisen in the first place; but when Josiah told him he had had one offered to him for 100, he said we might have his for 90 dollars, and he would throw in a stool and a tune-book and a spread for it.

"Can't you throw in a nice little melodeon?" says Josiah, for it sickened that man to see 'em go on. To see a man fall down 85 dollars to one fall! That feller hung round the biggest part of the day; was there to dinner and supper, but Josiah didn't give him no de-

cided answer, and finally he went off. But no sooner would one swarm go than another would come; and before the week was out the house was chuck full; you couldn't turn 'round without hittin' against a sewin'-machine, or a piano, or sunthin'.

And the fellers a-comin' and goin' at all hours! For a spell at first, Josiah would come in and talk with 'em, but after a while he got tired out, and when he would see one a-comin', he would start on a run for the barn and hide, and I would have to stand the brunt of it alone. One feller see Josiah a-runnin' for the barn, and he follered him in, and Josiah dove under the barn, as I found out afterward. I happened to see him a-crawlin' out after the feller drove off. Josiah came in a-shakin' himself, for he was all covered with straw and feathers, and says he,

"I will buy a gun the first hard work I do."

Says I, "I would be ashamed of myself, Josiah Allen. I guess it haint no harder for me than it is for you."

"Wal, I was a-calculatin' to make it easier for you. What do you suppose I was a-goin' to shootin' 'em for? It would help you as much as it would me to thin 'em off a little."

Says I, "Josiah, to say nothin' of the wickedness of it, it wouldn't do no good. Don't you remember the fox in the brambles? 'Let the old swarm remain, for if you drive 'em off, a hungryer set would come, and then I should be utterly devoured.'"

Wal, this took place about noon. I had a awful head-ache, and I told Josiah, says I, "How I am goin' to tussle with them agents this afternoon, I don't know, enjoyin' such poor health as I do to-day."

When I felt well, I could get along with 'em better, but it didn't seem to me as if I could argue with 'em all the afternoon, feelin' as I did, and Josiah had got to go up into the woods to work.

Says Josiah, "I'll fix 'em. I'll set a trap jest outside of the gate and ketch 'em in it."

Says I, "That won't do no good, Josiah; for if you should disable 'em, I should only have 'em to take care

of; and if you should ketch one in it, the rest could get over the fence."

Says Josiah, "Can't I fix the clothes-line so it would trip 'em up?"

"Not in the daytime," says I, depressedly.

"Take that old pop-gun of Thomas Jefferson's, and load it with beet-juice, and shoot 'em with it, and make 'em think you have drawed blood."

"There haint no beet-juice," says I, in a gloomy tone. "And if there was, how could I take aim, with my head as it is to-day?"

"Wal," says Josiah, "I have got to go, anyway. You lock up the house and go to bed, and mebby you can keep 'em out."

And so I did, as soon as Josiah started off. I let down the curtains and locked the doors, and laid down. I heard knockin' to the door a good many times, and a considerable movin' and stampin' round the house, but I never stirred till it was time for Josiah to come home, and then I rousted up and thought I would hang on the tea-kettle. Wal, I jest histed up a corner of the window-curtain, and I could jest see a pair of shinin' boots in front of the parlor door. I went to the other window, and there I could see the hull on him. It was that piano-man. I went into the kitchen jest as still as I could, and I heard a talkin' on the piazza, and I peeked through a hole in the curtain, and there sot two of 'em; one a sewin'-machine man, and the other a organ; so they was friendly to each other, and sot together.

As I stood there, the organ-man spoke up.

"They must be to home pretty soon, and I guess that piano-feller will find that I can stick it out as long as he can," says he.

"Yes," says the other feller, "and I guess that t'other feller will find that he can't tucker out me, if he should stay here all night."

Thinks I, "Mebby I can slip out the back door and fill the tea-kettle," but I'll be hanged if one didn't set there on the back stoop, lookin' down the road that led to Jonesville, as close as a cat would watch a rat-hole.

I went back to my room again, wore out and depressed, and I wished Josiah would come. I peeked out of the winder toward the barn, to see if I could see him, and happenin' to cast my eye down toward the ground, I see one of his boots stick out a little ways from under the barn; then I see that he had got as far as the barn before he see 'em, and then he hid. I knew there wouldn't be no gettin' him into the house till the enemy had dispersed, but yet it was a satisfaction to know that my companion was so near to me.

Wal, they never went away, so Josiah could come out of his hidin'-place, and I could get supper, till sundown, and I had to get supper and Josiah had to milk after dark. And says Josiah, as we was eatin' supper after bed-time,—

"Samantha, as for standin' it so much longer, I can't, and won't. It's a-runnin' you down, and I am spilin' my clothes a-crawlin' under that barn so much, to say nothin' of fillin' my hair and mouth with dirt, and straw, and feathers." He helped himself agin to the cherry-pie, and says, with a gloomy expression onto his face, "There has got to be a change."

"How is there going to be a change?" says I.

"I'll tell you," says he, in a whisper, for fear some on 'em was prowlin' round the house yet. "We will get up before light to-morrow mornin', and go to Jonesville and buy a organ right out."

I fell in with the idee, and we started for Jonesville the next mornin'. We got there jest after the break of day, and bought it of the man to the breakfast-table. Says Josiah to me afterward, as we was goin' down into the village,

"Let's keep dark about buying one, and see how many of the creeters will be a-besettin' on us to-day."

Says I, "You must love to be haunted by 'em better than do I."

Says he, "I'd love to fool 'em."

Says I, "It is jest about such foolin' as the little boy done that let his father whip him through a mistake, jest to fool his father." But seein' that my companion looked disappointed, I told him that "it wasn't my way

to tell everything I knew. I shouldn't say nothin' about havin' bought one."

So we kep' still, and there was half-a-dozen fellers follerin' us round all the time a'most, into stores and groceries, and the mantymaker's. And they would stop us on the sidewalk, and argue with us about their organs and pianos. One feller, a tall slim chap, he never let Josiah outen his sight a minute, and he followed him after he went after his horse, and walked by the side of the wagon, clear down to the store where I was, a-arguin' all the way about his piano. Josiah had bought a number of things, and left 'em to the store, and when we got there, there stood another one, the organ-man, by the side of the things, just like a watch-dog. He knew Josiah would have to come and get 'em, and he could get the last word with him.

Amongst other things, Josiah had bought a barrel of salt, and the piano-feller that had stuck to Josiah so tight all day offered to help Josiah on with it. And the organ-man, not going to be outdone by the other, he offered too. Josiah kinder winked to me, and then he held the old mare, and let 'em lift. They wasn't used to such kind of work, and it fell back on 'em once or twice, and most squshed 'em; but they hipped to, and lifted agin, and, finally, got it on. But they was completely tuckered out.

And then Josiah got in, and thanked 'em for the liftin', and the organ-man, a-wipin' the sweat offen his face, that had started out in his hard labor, said he "should be down to-morrow mornin'"; and the piano-man, a-pantin' for breath, told Josiah "not to make up his mind till he came. He should be down that night, if he got rested enough."

And then Josiah told 'em that "he should be glad to see 'em down a-visitin' any time; but he had jest bought a organ."

I don't know but what they would have laid holt of Josiah, if they hadn't been so tuckered out; but as it was, they was too beat out to look anything but sneakin'. And so we drove off.

The mantymaker had told me that day that there was

2 or 3 new agents with new kinds of machines jest come to Jonesville, and I was jest a-tellin' Josiah on it, when we met a middle-aged man, and he looked at us pretty close, and, finally, he asked us, as he went by us, "if we could tell him where Josiah Allen lived."

Says Josiah, "I am a-livin' at present in this one-horse wagon."

Says he, "You are thinkin' of buyin' a sewin'-machine, haint you?"

Says Josiah, "I am a-turnin' my mind that way."

At that the man turned his horse round, and followed us, and I see that he had a sewin'-machine in front of his wagon.

Our old mare had a colt, and seein' a strange horse come up so cluss behind us, it started the colt up, and she kicked up her heels, and started off full run toward Jonesville, and then run down a cross-road, and into a lot.

Says the man behind us, "I am a little younger than you be, Mr. Allen. If you will hold my horse, I will go after the colt, with pleasure."

Josiah was glad enough, and so he got into the feller's wagon; but before he started off, the man, says he, "You can look at that machine in front of you while I am gone. I tell you, frankly, that there haint another machine equal to it in America. It requires no strength at all; infants can run it for days at a time; idiots; if anybody knows enough to set and whistle, they can run this machine; and it is especially adapted to the blind —blind people can run it jest as well as them that can see. A blind woman last year, in one day, made 43 dollars a-makin' leather aprons; stitched 'em all round the edge two rows. She made 2 dozen of 'em, and then she made 4 dozen gauze veils the same day without changing the needle. That is one of the beauties of the machine, its goin' from leather to lace, and back again, without changing its gear—it makes it so handy for wimmin. It is so tryin' for wimmin, every time they want to go from leather to gauze and book muslin, to have to change the needle. But you can see for yourself that it haint got its equal in North America."

He heard the colt whinner, and Josiah stood up in the wagon, and looked after it. So he started off down the cross-road.

So we sot there, feelin' considerable like a procession, Josiah holdin' the stranger's horse, and I the old mare. And as we sot there, up driv another slick-lookin' chap, and I bein' ahead, he spoke to me, and says he,

"Can you direct me, mem, to Josiah Allen's house?"

"It is about a mile from here," and I added, in a friendly tone, "Josiah is my husband."

"Is he?" says he, in a genteel tone.

"Yes," says I. "We have been to Jonesville, and our colt ran down that cross-road, and——"

"I see," says he, interruptin' of me. "I see how it is." And then he went on in a lower tone, "If you think of buyin' a sewin'-machine, don't get one of that feller in the wagon behind you. I know him well—he is one of the most worthless shacks in the country, as you can plainly see by the looks of his countenance. If I ever see a face on which knave and villain is wrote down, it is on hisen. Any one with half-an-eye can see that he would cheat his grandmother out of her snuff-handkerchief, if he got a chance."

He talked so fast that I couldn't get a chance to put in a word edgeways for Josiah.

"His sewin'-machines are utterly worthless. He haint never sold one yet; he can't! His character has got out—folks know him. There was a lady telling me, the other day, that her machine she bought of him all fell to pieces in less than 24 hours after she bought it; fell onto her infant, a sweet little babe, and crippled it for life. I see your husband is havin' a hard time of it with that colt. I will jest hitch my horse here to the fence, and go down and help him. I want to have a little talk with him before he comes back here." So he started off on the run.

I told Josiah what he said about him, for it madded me, but Josiah took it cool. He seeemd to love to set there and see them two men run. I never *did* see a colt act as that one did. They didn't have time to pass a word with each other, to find out their mistake, it kep

em on a keen run. They would get it headed toward us, and then it would kick up its heels and run onto some lot, and canter round in a circle, with its head up in the air, and then bring up short against the fence. And then they would leap over the fence. The fust one had white pantaloons on, but he didn't mind 'em; over he would go, right into sikuta or elder bushes. And they would wave their hats at it, and holler, and whistle, and bark like dogs, and the colt would whinner and start off agin right the wrong way, and them 2 men would go a-pantin' after it. They had been a-runnin' nigh on to half-an-hour, when a good-lookin' young feller come along, and seein' me a-settin' still and holdin' the old mare, he up and says,

"Are you in any trouble that I can assist you?"

Says I, "We are going home from Jonesville, Josiah and me, and our colt got away and——"

But Josiah interrupted me, and says he, "And them 2 fools a-caperin' after it are sewin'-machine agents."

The good-lookin' chap see all through it in a minute, and he broke out into a laugh it would have done your soul good to hear, it was so clear, and hearty, and honest. But he didn't say a word; he drove out to go by us, and we see then that he had a machine in the buggy.

"Are you a agent?" says Josiah.

"Yes," says he.

"What sort a machine is this here?" says Josiah, liftin' up the oil-cloth from the machine in front of him.

"A pretty good one," says the feller, lookin' at the name on it.

"Is yours as good?" says Josiah.

"I think it is better," says he. And then he started for his horse.

"Hello! stop!" says Josiah.

The feller stopped.

"Why don't you run down other fellers' machines, and beset us to buy yours?"

"Because I don't make a practice of stoppin' people in the street."

"Do you haunt folks day and night? foller 'em up ladders, through trap-doors, down cellar and under the barn?"

"No," says the young chap. "I show people how my machine works. If they want it, I sell it; and if they don't, I leave."

"How much is your machine?" says Josiah.

"75 dollars."

"Can't you," says Josiah—"because I look so much like your old father, or because I am a Methodist, or because my wife's mother used to live neighbor to your grandmother—let me have it for 25 dollars?"

The feller got up in his wagon, and turned his machine round so we could see it plain. It was a beauty. And says he,

"You see this machine, sir. I think it is the best one made, although there is no great difference between this and the one over there; but I think what difference there is in this one's favor. You can have it for 75 dollars if you want it; if not, I will drive on."

"How do you like the looks on it, Samantha?"

Says I, "It is the kind I wanted to get."

Josiah took out his wallet and counted out 75 dollars, and says he,

"Put that machine into that wagon where Samantha is."

The good-lookin' young feller was jest liftin' of it in, and countin' over his money, when the 2 fellers come up with the colt. It seemed that they had had a explanation as they were comin' back. I see they had as quick as I ketched sight on 'em, for they was a-walkin' one on one side of the road, and the other on the other, 'most tight up to the fence. They was 'most dead, the colt had run 'em so, and it did seem as if their faces couldn't look no redder nor more madder than they did, as we hitched right on 'em. But they did when Josiah thanked 'em for drivin' back the colt, and when they see that the other feller had sold us a machine, their faces did look redder and madderer yet.

But I didn't care a mite. We drove off tickled enough that we had got through with our sufferens with agents. And the colt had got so beat out a-runnin' and racin' that he drove home first-rate, walkin' along by the old mare as stiddy as a deacon.

The effect of this graphic delineation, the second in our group of Humorous Tales, should be to make an inventor think a good many times before bestowing one of his contrivances upon a friend. Keyes Becker has written the story for ROMANCE.

SCARRITT'S WEDDING GIFT.

IT was all the fault of Scarritt's philosophico-inventive mind. I said to him one day:

"Scarritt, you will invent something yet that will make enemies of all the friends you have."

"Not if they know how to use it," he replied. "My inventions are all as simple as A, B, C. Any child can use them, once they understand what they are for."

I always liked Scarritt. We went through college together, and he still kept the disposition which had there gained him the reputation of a jolly good fellow.

But Scarritt had a weakness: he would invent things. His inventions were peculiar. That they were original, nobody denied; that they were useful, nobody admitted.

He had invented a machine for picking poultry, but the machine cost more than hired help and it was slow, though it did its work well enough.

Another invention of his was a combination salt-and-pepper shaker. It worked to perfection if you didn't care which condiment you sprinkled upon your food; but if you desired pepper, it was sure to render salt, and *vice versa*.

He had contrived a combination sleigh-and-carriage, which would have been a bonanza except that it cost a small fortune to have it manufactured at all. So that, while aiming at economy, Scarritt had achieved only luxury.

Yet Scarritt was not discouraged. He went happily forward, inventing something new and ingenious every little while. It was the general opinion of his friends that in time he would invent something really great, and very possibly without malice aforethought.

But this story is about a wedding gift.

After a sufficiently ardent courtship of Nanette Cartwright, I had offered myself and been accepted; first, by the young lady herself, then by her more formidable papa, and through these two by the entire Cartwright family. It was then decided by Nanette and myself that we would be married in June of the following summer.

I began at once the construction of a cottage in the suburbs. It was to be ready for us when we returned from the honeymoon. This modest home was not too far away from my business, and at the same time it held all the charms of the country. I was careful to provide it with all modern conveniences, however, and that was primarily the cause of Scarritt's wedding gift.

I was dining at the club one day, when Scarritt, looking especially radiant, joined me at the table.

"You look happy, Scarritt," I remarked; "not going to be married too, are you?"

"Oh, no, Beason; but I've just got a patent for my combination lock and burglar-alarm, and I feel as good or even better than a bachelor about to become a benedict."

"Ah, that is good luck—although I can't say I would trade places with you."

"Well, every man to his taste. But my lock is better than wedlock—for me. I have all arrangements made for its manufacture, too, and inside of thirty days I will have it on the market."

"What are its especial features?"

"Simplicity of construction is one. You push a button, and it locks all your doors and windows. Then if any one tries to effect an entrance, it sounds an alarm and registers the point of attack, so you know just where to look for the marauder—who is generally gone when you look for him. Anyway, he can't get in, and it's an elegant thing, especially for suburban houses, where the constabulary is either inadequate or entirely wanting."

"There is certainly a large field for such an invention," I said, encouragingly. "I may want to put one into my new house in the suburbs. What do they cost?"

"Don't know exactly, but I'll make you rock-bottom figures on one," replied Scarritt.

Of course, I never really intended to buy one of the things, and from that time until my wedding-day I banished the subject completely from my mind.

It was at the wedding reception that Scarritt came to us with his hearty congratulations and good wishes, and went on to remark:

"I have a little present for you, but I couldn't exactly deliver it here, so I have sent it to your new home, and it will be ready to receive you when you return from the wedding-trip."

"Oh, Mr. Scarritt, I'm sure it's something lovely!" exclaimed the bride with enthusiasm.

"I don't know that you will retain that opinion after you see the article," Scarritt replied. "It is strictly utilitarian—ought to be in every household. In fact, it's one of my new patents—a combination lock and burglar-alarm. I'm going to have it put in, and it will be all in working order when you return."

I felt that a cloud had already appeared upon our fair horizon, but the least I could do was to express my thanks to Scarritt for his gift.

I saw that he had taken in earnest my friendly inquiry at the club regarding his invention, and he was confident I should be pleased with one. I hoped that it would turn out all right, but I had grave doubts, which followed me during two weeks of an otherwise unalloyed honeymoon.

We returned a day or two sooner than we expected, and repaired at once to the new house, which Nanette was very anxious to "get settled." I was glad to be early on the scene, for I had a feeling that the burglar-alarm would give me trouble of some kind. And so it proved.

Thoughtful friends had arranged things in something like order at the cottage, and I soon discovered the centripetal point of Scarritt's present. It was an innocent-looking button in the hallway.

I called Nanette to look at it.

"This is Scarritt's gift," said I.

"Where?"

"There—that button, and those wires running from it."

"Oh, and will it work? How nice of Mr. Scarritt to think of giving us such a present! I shall feel just perfectly safe when you are away, Fred, and you will know I am secure from harm when I can lock myself all in and scare away all the tramps, won't you, dear?"

"Um-um," said I, twisting the button. It refused to move. Then I remembered that Scarritt had told me it would not lock up the house unless all the doors and windows were closed. As it was a warm day, we had opened two or three windows. I closed these, and tried the button again. It turned.

On examination I found everything as tight as a drum. I was much pleased. Scarritt's gift was going to be a genuine comfort, after all.

Having made a careful survey, I returned to the centripetal point in the hallway, for the purpose of unlocking the house. The button turned, but the doors refused to open. The windows proved equally obstinate. Again and again I turned the button. It worked easily in either direction, but the connection was apparently off.

"Won't it unlock?" said Nanette.

"Oh, I guess there's something the matter with it," I replied evasively. I hated to have my wife think I was not master of any situation.

I pulled the wires, pushed the button, pried on the windows, and struggled with the doors—all to no purpose. We were apparently very much at home.

"Oh, Fred, it's so warm! Do open a window, please!" came in an appealing voice from the lady of the house.

"Well, I'm trying my level best," I replied, mopping the perspiration from my red-hot features.

"Oh, dear! I'm afraid we're imprisoned. Won't anybody rescue us?"

"I can break through a window, if nothing else will do," said I in a tone that corresponded favorably with the temperature.

"But that would set off the alarm, wouldn't it?" said she.

"True, I had not thought of that."

Here was a predicament—locked in our own house in a strange neighborhood, and no prospect of escape without creating a commotion of some sort.

The closed house was becoming almost unbearable by reason of the heat; it was fast approaching nightfall, and signs of a storm were evident in the West; none of our relatives knew we were home; there was little or no food in the house, no provision for light, and no prospect of deliverance.

Scarritt's gift was outdoing my utmost expectations.

I began to curse the day when he had invented the thing and the hour when he had presented it to me.

Nanette, tired with her journey, was in no condition to endure such a state of affairs. Her imagination began at once to exercise itself.

"What if nobody should find us for days, Fred? Shouldn't we starve? Oh, how dreadful to have our bodies found here, in this new house! And just think of having our names in the papers for days and days!"

"Oh, somebody will be here before long and find us," said I, sitting down disconsolately on the staircase.

"And oh, Fred, what if the house should take fire? I have read of children being locked up in houses and burned to death while their parents were away, and I have always thought what a horrible death it would be!"

I could not deny the horror of a holocaust, so I held my peace.

"Fred, dear, if either of us should be sick in the night, what could we do? How could I get a doctor if you were sick? Oh, dear! I just *know* you will be! You look so tired and pale now, poor boy!"

As I did not even know that the suburb possessed a doctor, I maintained a discreet silence.

Just here a distant roll of thunder stole in through the air-tight casement.

"There! I am just certain we are going to have a tornado, and the whole village will be blown away, and not a sign of us will ever be discovered!" exclaimed my now agonized wife.

It was clear that I was about to have a case of hysteria on my hands. I did not relish the prospect, for my knowledge of materia medica was very slight.

I did my best to comfort my tearful bride. Happily there was water in the house, and the remnants of a lunch from our gripsack served us in good stead for our first supper at home.

"There is one thing we need not fear, Nanette," said I.

"What is that?"

"Burglars."

"Oh, dear! I think I'd be glad to see even a burglar. Have you tried to set off the alarm, Fred?"

"No; I didn't know of any way except by breaking a lock."

"Won't it go off kind of easy, so that the neighbors won't be frightened, you know?"

"Don't think so. If Scarritt had any alarm at all, it would go hard."

"Oh, don't go near the thing, then! What if it should go off, and the police should come and carry us off to jail!"

"Well, this seems to be a pretty tight jail right here, with small chances of getting bailed out," I replied.

By this time it had grown dark, and we prepared to pass the night as best we could.

The shower came and passed, leaving the atmosphere more oppressive than before. Sleep was manifestly impossible. I fanned Nanette, who was restless and full of fears.

We should be rescued in the morning, I assured her.

"Isn't it 'most morning?" she asked.

I struck a match and looked at my watch. It was half-past ten.

Every minute seemed an hour, without rebate.

Finally I thought of something:

"Nanette, I've an idea."

"What is it?"

"There's a big, wide chimney to this cottage, isn't there?"

"Yes."

"Well, I believe I can get out of here through that chimney."

"But, Fred, how can you get past the bend? I'm sure you never can."

"Nothing like trying, Nan—and I'm going to try as soon as it's daylight."

"But suppose somebody should see you?"

"Let 'em see! I'm for getting out of this place before I have to be carried out."

"But you'll be sure to fall, dear, and break a leg."

"Well, I'll risk that part of it. I'll take a rope along with me, and let myself down easy from the top. You'll see!"

"Oh, I do hope you can. Then you won't have to make the alarm sound, will you?—But what are you going to do when you get down?"

"Going to send for Scarritt."

"And leave me here all alone?"

"Oh, not for long."

"But I don't want you to go away."

"Well, I must for a little while—only a little while, Nan."

"Oh, I shall be scared to death, I just know I shall!"

I calmed her fears, and she finally fell asleep.

At the first break of day I repaired to the chimney, and found that it was wide enough to admit me.

I prepared for the ascent by removing the most of my clothing, and tying around my waist a rope, which I intended to use in letting myself down from the chimney-top.

While Nan slept, I thought it a good opportunity to make the ascent, hoping I could get out and return with the combination to Scarritt's lock before she awoke.

I got in the chimney and worked up to the bend without difficulty. The bend was a sharp one. After passing it I paused for a rest and a view of the situation. From that point the chimney narrowed to the top. It was rough climbing, but I started again, and went on until I found the opening was too small to proceed further. I worked hard, but finally had to give up the

idea of further advancement in that direction. On preparing to descend, however, I found I could make no progress downward. In vain I pushed and strained and twisted. I was wedged fast. I was afraid to call aloud for fear of waking Nan, who would be frightened if she could not see me anywhere.

For at least an hour I remained in my tight place. This gave me plenty of time to reflect on my past life and the warmth of the weather. Finally I heard Nanette calling for me. I shouted in response, and she came to the fireplace, where I had left my clothing.

"Fred, where are you?" she screamed.

"Here—up the chimney!" I replied.

"Oh, are you hurt, or killed, or anything?"

"No—only stationary."

"Are you nearly out?"

"No—can't get out."

"Then come down."

"Can't."

"Why can't you?"

"Stuck fast."

"Oh, oh, how ever shall you get out? You'll be asphyxiated—I know you will! What shall I do?"

I could not well see how I was going to be asphyxiated unless there was a fire somewhere, but I thought it likely that I might be suffocated without much trouble. I wasted no words in comment, but told Nan to watch for some one going by.

She took up her station at the window, and every little while would come to the fireplace and inquire:

"Are you there?"

I could not deny that I was.

After a while Nan shouted up the chimney:

"Oh, Fred! I see some one coming—two men."

"Be sure and stop them," I replied.

Soon again she came and said:

"They're coming right to the cottage. One of them is a workman, and I think the other is Mr. Scarritt."

Oh, joy! The very man I had started heavenward to secure! I listened intently, but could hear a confused

murmur only. However, it was not long ere Scarritt's familiar voice came up to me from the fireplace:

"Hello, Beason! You up there?"

"Yes."

"Well, can't you get down?"

"No."

"Are you tied fast to this rope?"

"Yes."

"Well, watch out, and I'll pull you down."

"All right—pull away!"

One strong pull, and then another, and I was at the bend. Stiff and sore as I was, I yet lost no time in reaching the floor.

At sight of me, Scarritt took occasion to roar with laughter.

"Well, what is so terrible funny about this?" I growled.

"Why didn't you push the right button and unlock the house?"

"I pushed the only button there was," said I.

"No, you didn't. There was another button just across the hall."

"Well, how did I know that?"

"Why didn't you break out of a window? Then you could have unlocked the door."

"Yes, but that confounded burglar-alarm of yours is warranted to go off at the slightest provocation, and I didn't want to arouse the neighborhood and be arrested for breaking out of my own house."

"Ha! ha! ha! The burglar-alarm isn't in yet! I came up with a carpenter this morning to put it in. You said you weren't coming home until day after to-morrow, so I figured we would have plenty of time to get everything arranged. Ha! ha! I wish the boys at the club could see you now! Oh, my eyes! How they will enjoy this story!"

And to keep Scarritt quiet I had to promise that I would recommend his new patent as the safest, simplest and most secure thing of the kind ever invented.

The younger readers of this magazine will especially relish this funny little episode by Georges Courtelines. It is put into English for ROMANCE by Rheta Louise Childs, and forms the third in our promised group of Humorous Tales.

A SINGULAR CASE.

The Doctor (hat in hand).—You sent for me, Madame?

The distracted Mother.—Oh yes, doctor; come in, I beg you. Oh, doctor! My poor little boy. Just imagine! He hasn't done anything all the morning but fall down.

The Doctor.—Fall down?

The Mother.—Every few minutes. Indeed it's so.

The Doctor.—He falls down, you say; to the floor?

The Mother.—Yes; to the floor.

The Doctor.—That is strange. How old is the child?

The Mother.—Two years and a half.

The Doctor.—He ought certainly, at that age, to have the use of his legs. How did this attack commence?

The Mother.—I assure you, I cannot tell. He seemed perfectly well last night,—trotted around the house like a little lamb. This morning I took him up and dressed him, as I always do; I gave him his breakfast and started him off to play, when suddenly the poor little angel fell down.

The Doctor.—He probably stumbled.

The Mother.—So I thought, at first. I ran and picked him up and put him on his feet. He took a step, and fell a second time. Again I picked him up; again he fell. And so on, seven or eight times in succession. In short, doctor, the whole morning he has been getting picked up only to fall to the floor again. I am terribly alarmed, of course.

The Doctor.—I don't wonder, Madame. It is a very singular case. I shall have to see the child.

The Mother.—To be sure. (She hastens from the room, returning immediately with a chubby child, whose round cheeks are crimson, not with fever, but

with extravagant health. He is dressed in white embroidered trousers and frock, and betrays evidences of a recent incursion on the jam-closet.)

The Doctor.—Fine child! Superb constitution. Put him down, if you please, Madame. (The mother obeys; the child promptly tumbles over.)

The Doctor.—Ah! Again, please. (Child is set on his feet—falls to the floor.)

The Doctor.—Now, once more. (Performance repeated, third and fourth times.)

The Doctor (musingly).—Most extraordinary! (To the patient, who stands supported by his anxious parent:) Ah—my young friend, tell me, have you any pain? Does anything hurt you?

The afflicted Child.—No, sir.

The Doctor.—Your little head doesn't ache?

The Child.—No, sir.

The Doctor.—Did you sleep well last night?

The Child.—Yes, sir.

The Doctor.—You ate your breakfast this morning? Was it good? Did you like it?

The Child.—Yes, sir.

The Doctor (gloomily).—Well, Madame, I am obliged to tell you that there is little doubt that your offspring is afflicted with paralysis.

The Mother.—Paralysis! Oh, heaven! (She throws her arms toward the ceiling; the child falls.)

The Doctor.—Alas, Madame, too true. It is a clear case of paralysis of the lower limbs. If you will examine the child, you will find that his legs are quite dead,—utterly insensible—(as he speaks, he picks up the child, reverses him,—and then, red with sudden indignation:) Madame! What joke is this you have been trying to play on me?

The Mother (stupefied).—Doctor!

(The doctor's face clears and he bursts out laughing.) You are enough to give any one a paralysis. See what you have done!

(Nothing much; only, in dressing the child she had put both feet through the same drawer-leg.)

Good people cannot sin with comfort. That is, perhaps, the chief difference between good people and bad people. We are strenuously told in various widely-believed volumes that mankind are wicked without exception. Mr. MacLaren Corban, in the *Strand Magazine*, shows that an excellent and conscientious clergyman may, under sufficient temptation (every man has his price, you know) fall like any poltroon. But every reader will feel a kindly pity for the reverend sinner even at the crowning moment of his crime.

THE MINISTER'S CRIME.

I.

"THERE is really little use in my continuing to call," said the doctor; "it will only be running you into useless expense. I may go on prescribing and prescribing till I get through the whole pharmacopœia, but I can do him no good; what he needs is not drugs, but air—a bracing air. Get him away out of this, and let him run wild in the country, or—if your engagements won't let you get to the country—remove to some open suburb north or south."

The doctor sat in a little parlor, in a shabby-genteel street of close-packed middle London. Opposite him was the patient, a child of three or four, on his mother's knee and clasped about with his mother's arms, while his father, the Rev. James Murray, stood anxiously listening. The boy—the first-born, and the only child of his parents—had a month or two before been stricken down with an infant's ailment, and though that had passed, he continued so weak that the doctor had tested the soundness of heart and lungs, and the outcome of his examination was that the only hope for the child was change of air.

"I only wish," said the father, "that I could take him away. I must try, though I don't see at present how I am to do it."

He turned away to the window to hide the emotion that would rise to choke him when he met the large,

weary blue eyes of his boy bent on him, as if in appeal that he might not be allowed to fade and wither and die, like a flower before it has fairly bloomed.

"Can't you at least send the boy away with his mother?" asked the doctor.

"I must try," said the father without turning round. "I must see what can be done."

"In the mean time," said the doctor, rising, "go on with the cod-liver oil and malt extract."

The doctor went, and still the Rev. James Murray stood by the window, striving to keep down the emotion that demanded to have its way. The wife rose with the child in her arms and went close to her husband.

"James, my dear," said she in a low voice (and she took his hand), "don't, my dear!"

James turned with the impulse of all his passionate love for his wife and child, and drew them together to his breast and bent his head over them. And one great sob of anguish broke from him, and one tear of bitter agony sprang in his eye, and fell hot upon his wife's hand.

"Oh, James, my darling!" she cried, clinging to him. "Don't! God will be good to us!"

They stood thus for some seconds, while no sound was heard but the loud ticking of the cheap lodging-house clock on the mantelpiece. The wife sobbed a little in sympathy with her husband; not that she considered at all how her own heart was wrung, but that she felt how his was. Seeing and hearing her, he recovered himself.

"Come, my dear," said he, "this does no good. Let us sit down, and see what can be arranged."

He led her back to her seat. He sat down beside her, transferred the boy to his own lap, and held her hand.

"Come now, Jim," said he to his boy, "how am I going to get you and your mammy to the country? Eh?"

"Daddy come too," said the child, putting his arm about his father's neck.

"I would, Jim, I would," said he, with the faintest suspicion of a painful catch in his voice still; "but I have no money. And I don't know how mammy and

you are to go, unless some kind friend offers to take you in."

"Oh, James dear!" exclaimed the wife, impulsively, catching her husband's hand to her cheek. "It's I who have taken you from kind friends! I am a burden to you, and nothing but a burden!"

"My dear wife," said he, bending to her, "you are the sweetest burden that man could bear, and I'd rather have you than all else the world could give."

"It's beautiful, my dear," said she, "to hear you say so. It's like sweet music to me; but it's not true. If you had married another—if you had married differently, and as you were expected to have married—you would not be here now; and if you had a sick boy, like our dear, poor Jim, there would have been no difficulty in getting to the country, or in getting anything that was needed for him! But you married me, and—my poor, dear love!—you bear the penalty!"

"Mary," said he, with a certain touch of solemnity in his voice, "I have not for one instant regretted that we loved each other, and married each other, and, whatever may come, I shall not regret it. The complete love of a woman like you is more precious than rubies. Your love, my darling,"—and he caressed the head crowned with a glory of bright hair—"is the joy of my life—God forgive me!"

She drew again his hand to her cheek, and pressed it there, and said no word more. And so they sat for a few seconds longer, while the vulgar, intrusive clock, with a kind of limp in its noisy tick, seemed to say: "It's time! It's time!"

Let us take the opportunity of this pause to explain how the Reverend James Murray got into the anxious position in which we find him. He was a minister of a well-known denomination of Nonconformists. When he left college he had been reckoned a young man of great promise, and of considerable powers of persuasive eloquence, and he was expected to become a famous preacher. He was invited to be the minister of a large and wealthy congregation in a Northern manufacturing town. He accepted the invitation, and for two or three

years he was a great favorite with his people; never, they declared, had they heard so fine a preacher (though he was sometimes so "fine" that they did not understand him), and never had they known a better man. His praise was in everybody's mouth; the men admired him and the women adored him. But he was a bachelor, and there was not an unmarried lady in the congregation who did not aspire to be his wife, which put him in the awkward and invidious position of having to prefer one out of many. He astonished and offended all the well-to-do ladies by falling in love with and marrying the pretty, shy governess of one of the wealthiest families—a girl who had not been regarded as having the smallest chance of occupying the proud place of minister's wife. His marriage alienated the women, and through them cooled the ardor of the men. The situation was strained, but it might have gradually returned to its former easy condition, had not the minister soon after his marriage become what is termed "broad" in his religious views and uncompromising in his expression of them. His people grew alarmed, and his deacons remonstrated—with less friendliness of feeling, probably, than if he had not offended them by his marriage—but the minister declared he could not do otherwise than preach what he believed to be the truth. Then some people left him, and others would not speak to him, and his position became so difficult and finally so unbearable that he could do nothing but send in his resignation. He shook the dust and the grime of that Northern town off his feet, and with sore heart and slender purse journeyed to London. He was resolved to labor among the "masses"; if the arrogant and wealthy classes of the North would not hear him, he was sure the poor of London, bending beneath the weary burden of life, would hear him gladly. He had not been in London long when he became minister to a venerable, half-deserted chapel in one of those curiously quiet corners made by the rushing currents and the swirling eddies of the life of our huge metropolis. It was close to the heart of London, and yet no one knew it was there but the handful of small shopkeepers and

their families and the few devout and destitute old women who made up its congregation. These poor people were fluttered with pride when they got so clever and beautiful a preacher for their own; they looked to see ere long the old chapel crowded with an attentive congregation, as it had been in other days; and the chapel-keeper (who was also a painter) had put all the magnificent hopes of himself and his friends in the fresh inscription he made on the faded notice-board in the fore-court, "MINISTER, THE REV. JAMES MURRAY, M.A.," in letters of gold.

A year had passed since then, and the minister's heart was sad. He had spent himself for the benefit of the poor that sweltered round that old chapel, and the poor did not seem to want him or his ministrations any more than the wealthy; they would gather round him if he spread a tea for them, but they would not come to hear him preach; so the chapel remained as empty as when he first ascended his pulpit. Most harassing and weary anxiety of all, he was desperately poor. How he and his wife and child had lived during the year it would be difficult to tell; from the treasurer of the chapel funds he had received less than sixty pounds, and he was in debt for his lodgings, in debt to the doctor, his and his wife's clothes were become painfully shabby, and his child was sick unto death.

What now was to be done?

"If I had only two or three pounds in hand," said he, "or if I could raise them, I could send you and Jim away to some quiet seaside place; but everything is gone—everything!"

"Don't be cast down, my dear," said his wife, raising her head, and bravely smiling. "It is always darkest and coldest before the dawn. Something may come to us just when we least expect it."

"I am angry with myself," said he, "for being so cast down; but I can't help it. I care nothing for myself—nothing at all, you know, Mary; I have good health, and I can live on little. It's seeing you, my dear, and poor little Jim, going without things you ought to have, that goes to my heart; and to know now that the boy's

life would be saved if I could do something which I have no hope of doing!—oh! it maddens me! I ask myself over and over again if I've done wrong to any one that we should be at this desperate pass!"

"My dear, dear husband!" exclaimed his wife, again caressing his hand. "You done wrong to any one? You could not hurt a fly! We must be patient and brave, my dear, and bear it. And Jim, poor boy, may really be improving: doctors sometimes make mistakes."

But it needed only to look at the child's thin, limp figure, his transparent skin, and his large, sad, lustreless eyes, to be convinced that there the doctor had made no mistake. The boy would die unless he could be taken into the fresh, stimulating air of the seaside or the country. The parents glanced at the boy, and then looked involuntarily each into the sad face of the other, and turned their heads away.

At that moment there came a loud, double "rat-tat" at the street door, which made them both jump. Their sitting-room was on the ground-floor. The minister rose, pale and expectant. He heard no one coming to answer the summons.

"I wonder if it's for me?" he said.

"Go and see," said his wife.

He went into the passage and opened the door.

"Murray?" said the telegraph boy, and, on being answered "Yes," handed a reply-paid telegram.

The minister's fingers trembled so he could scarcely tear the envelope open. He took the telegram in to his wife, and read it aloud:

"Can you supply Upton Chapel on Sunday next? Letter to follow."

That was all, with the name and address of the sender appended. Both the minister and his wife knew the Upton Chapel, and perceived at once that that was the most hopeful thing that had happened to them for more than a year.

"Yes," wrote the minister on the reply form, which he handed to the telegraph boy.

"Thank God for that, Mary," said he, when he re-

turned to her. "Now I can send you and Jim away for at least a week! Thank God, my dear!"

He kissed her, and then set himself in his agitation to walk up and down the little room.

"That will mean five pounds for us, I believe; I don't want to count the fee I shall get, but I can't help it now. It's a rich congregation, and I think I must get that. And Mary," he went on, "what if they should ask me to be their minister? You know they are without one. Perhaps the 'letter to follow' will say something. Upton is a beautiful, bracing suburb, and Jim —our own little Jim!"—and he raised him in his arms —"would get strong there!"

"Ah, my dear," said his wife, "it is too tempting. I am afraid to hope. But I am sure when once they hear you they will like you. Now let us think: what sermons will you take?"

II.

The "letter to follow" came by a late post, but it was only a fuller and politer version of the telegram. It hoped that Mr. Murray would be able to give the Upton congregation the pleasure of listening to him, it apologized for the short notice (it was then Friday), and it invited the minister to dine with the writer on Sunday. It thus gave no hint that the eye of the Upton congregation might be on Mr. Murray, but at the same time it did not completely dash the hope that it might be.

On Saturday the minister sat down and wrote one sermon expressly for the occasion, and with that and another in his pocket he set off on Sunday morning to fulfil his engagement with some trepidation.

The aspect of the Upton Chapel was itself cheerful and inspiriting. It was nearly new, and it was large and handsome in a semi-Gothic, open-raftered style; moreover, it was well filled, without being crowded. It was a complete contrast to the place where Mr. Murray usually ministered, where most of the high-backed, musty pews were quite empty, where a kind of fog hung perpetually, and where the minister, perched aloft in the pulpit, was as "a voice crying in the wilderness."

Then, in the Upton Chapel there was a fine organ and good singing by a well-trained choir. When the minister, therefore, rose to preach his sermon, it was with a sense of exaltation and inspiration which he had not felt for years. He delivered himself with effect, and he was listened to with wakeful attention and apparent appreciation. When the service was over, and one leader of the congregation after another came to the vestry to shake him warmly by the hand and to thank him for his "beautiful discourse," he thanked God and took courage, and wished that his Mary were with him, instead of sitting lonely and anxious in their little lodging with their sick boy.

He went in good spirits to the home of his host, who was a merchant in the city, and he sat down with the family to the ample Sunday dinner. He sat next his hostess, a gentle, motherly lady, who asked him if he was married and if he had any children; and he told her of Mary and the child. His host was a shrewd man, of middle age, who had clearly read much and thought a good deal, and all his family (three grown sons and two daughters) were intelligent and cultivated, and took a modest but sufficient share in the conversation of the table, and all listened to such opinions as the minister uttered with attention and understanding. Mr. Murray, therefore, felt he was in a sociable, frank, and refined atmosphere, and he thought within himself: "What a place of brightness and pleasant endeavor this would be after my rude and stormy experience of the North and this terrible year in London! And, oh, what a haven of rest and health for my darling wife and boy!"

So it was with unaffected joy, when he walked round the large garden with his host after dinner, that he heard him say:

"I think, Mr. Murray, absolute frankness in these matters is best. Let me ask you, if you were invited to become our minister, would you be willing? Would you like to come to us?"

"As frankly as you put the question," said Mr. Murray, "I answer that, from all I know and have seen of the Upton congregation, I should like to be your minis-

ter. Of course it would be pleasanter for me and for all if the invitation were as nearly unanimous as may be."

"Quite so," said his host. "I ought to say that, though I am the chairman, I have at present no authority to speak for any but myself and my family. But we have heard a good report of you, Mr. Murray, and I know that many of our people have been much impressed by you this morning." Then, unconsciously, he went on to dash somewhat the minister's lively hopes. "There is a young man—Mr. Lloyd; you may know him. No? Well—some of our people are very much taken with him. He is a brilliant, popular sort of a young fellow, but he is young—he has only been some two years or so a minister—and he is unmarried, and—and, well, I don't want to say anything against him—but he is just a little flighty, and we older folk doubt how we should get on with him. I am glad, however, to have your assurance that you would come if you were asked."

He put his arm within the minister's, and thus they returned into the house. And—as if that had been a sign of consent agreed upon—all the company (and there were now a good many guests assembled) beamed upon them as they entered the drawing-room.

"I am so glad," said the eldest daughter of the house, bringing Mr. Murray a cup of tea and sitting down by him, "to know that you are willing to be our minister."

"How do you know I am?" he asked, with a smile.

"Oh," she answered with a blush and a light laugh, "we arranged for a sign from my father, so that we should all know at once. You are willing, are you not?"

"I am," he answered, "quite."

"And I hope—I do hope—you will be asked."

Presently there came to him an unknown young man, and said: "I don't often go to chapel or church, but if you often preach sermons like this morning's, I should always go to hear you, I think."

This was a flattering tribute, and the minister showed his appreciation of it.

"Well, I confess," he said, "it is at least pleasant to hear you say so."

Thus the time passed till the hour for the evening service. The gas was lit, and floor and galleries were crowded with people. The minister had chosen a simple and pathetic theme for his evening discourse: "He took little children in his arms and blessed them"; and he spoke out of the fulness of experience and with the tender feeling of the father of a sick child, insomuch that all were moved, many even to sobs and tears. There was no doubt that he carried his audience with him; and, as in the morning, he had to shake many hands and receive many thanks.

Last of all, his host of the day came and asked him to take also the services of the next Sunday; and then he hastened home by train to his wife with hopeful, grateful heart.

"There, Mary, my dear," said he, giving her the £5 note in an envelope as it had been slipped into his hand; "that's for you and Jim. I'll take you both down to Margate to-morrow—the air of Margate is the most bracing in England—and you can stay for two or three weeks at least, and the boy will begin to grow strong."

For answer Mary threw herself into her husband's arms and sobbed upon his breast.

"Oh, how good God is, James! Let us be thankful, my dear! Oh, let us be thankful!"

Next day the minister took his wife and child to Margate, and placed them in lodgings on the breezy cliff-top. On Tuesday he returned to town; for he had much to do to prepare for his second Sunday at Upton and to fill the vacancy at the old, deserted chapel. In spite of his occupation, he began, before the week was out, to feel lonely and depressed; for he and his wife had not been separated before, save for a day or two, since the hour of their marriage. In the solitude of his close and dingy lodging he restlessly and morbidly meditated on his desire to go to Upton and his chances of going. Had he any right to go, with such mercenary motives as moved him? But was the health of wife and child a mercenary motive? And had he not other motives also

—motives of truth and duty? If it was wrong to seek to go to Upton for these reasons, then God forgive him, for he could not help longing to go!

It was in something of that depressed and troubled mood that he went to fulfil his second Sunday. The congregation was larger than on the previous Sunday morning, and the minister felt that many must have come expressly to hear him; and, therefore, he had less brightness and freedom of delivery than on the Sunday before. He felt, when the service was over, that he had not acquitted himself well, and he began anew to torture himself with the thoughts of what would become of Mary and Jim if he should miss his chance of Upton.

To add discomfort to discomfort, and constraint to constraint, he was introduced in the vestry to the Rev. Mr. Lloyd—his rival, as he felt bound to consider him; and to his host for the day—a stout, loud-spoken, rather vulgar-looking man, who dropped his h's.

When they reached the home of his host (who clearly was a wealthy man, for the house was large and furnished with substantial splendor), he discovered that his rival also was to be a guest. That did not serve to put him more at his ease, the less that he perceived that host and rival seemed on very friendly, if not familiar, terms. They called one another "Lloyd" and "Brown," and slapped each other on the back. "Brown" said something, and "Lloyd" flatly and boisterously contradicted and corrected him, and then "Brown" laughed loudly, and seemed to like it. Thus dinner wore away, while Mr. Murray said little save to his hostess—a pale, thin, and somewhat depressed woman, grievously overburdened, it was clear, with a "jolly" husband, and a loud and healthy young family. After dinner "Lloyd" romped and rollicked in and out of the house with the troop of noisy children, while Mr. Murray kept his hostess and her very youngest company, and the attention of his host was divided between duty and inclination—the duty of sitting by his wife and guest, and the inclination of "larking with 'Lloyd.'"

"Look at him!" he exclaimed once. "Isn't he a jolly

fellow? I do think he's a capital fellow! Oh, yes; and he has a nice mind."

It was all very depressing and saddening to Mr. Murray, though he appeared only to be very quiet. For he thought: A large congregation like this of Upton must necessarily have more people like these Browns than like my friends of last Sunday; and it must, therefore, needs be that this Mr. Lloyd—who has no harm in him, I dare say, but who is little more than a rough noisy presumptuous boy not long from school—it must be that he should be preferred by the majority to me. I may as well, then, give up all hope of coming here. But what then of Mary and the boy—the boy?"

He was scarcely more satisfied with himself after the evening service (though he held the attention again of a crowded congregation), and he went back to his lonely lodging with a sore and doubting heart. He wrote, however, cheerfully (he thought) to his wife, but next day she replied to his letter and showed that his assumed cheerfulness had not deceived the watchful sense of love.

"You are not in good spirits, my dear," she wrote; "don't pretend you are. If you are not better to-day, I shall come home to you, though little Jim is beginning to show the benefit of the change."

"Poor little chap!" the father thought. "He is beginning to improve. They must not come back, and I must not go down to them. My glum face would frighten Mary, and I should have to tell her all my fears. Besides, I cannot afford it. Oh, that it might be settled I'm to go to Upton!"

That was the refrain of his thoughts all that day. "Oh, that I might go to Upton!" It was a kind of prayer, and surely as worthy a prayer, and springing from as pure and loving a desire as any prayer that is uttered. He could do nothing more, however, to attain the desired end; he could only wait. Monday passed, and Tuesday, and still no word from Upton. On Wednesday came a letter from his first host—the chairman of the committee. It contained little, but that little was charged with meaning and anxiety for the minister.

Nothing, it declared, was yet absolutely decided; but on Thursday evening there was to be held a certain debate in the lecture-room, in which it had been resolved that both Mr. Murray and Mr. Lloyd should be asked to take part.

"I am not officially instructed," continued the writer, "to say this to you, but I think I ought to tell you that there is a disposition among a good many to form their final choice for you or for Mr. Lloyd on the conclusion of the debate."

III.

It was put gently and carefully, but the meaning of the communication to the minister plainly was that it had come to a contest between him and the young Mr. Lloyd, and that whichever should acquit himself in this debate most to the satisfaction and admiration of the audience would straightway be chosen as minister.

It was a terrible situation for the minister—how terrible none but himself knew, and none, not even the wife of his bosom, could ever sufficiently understand. He was a bad debater, and, worse than that, he was the most nervous, hesitating, and involved extempore speaker in the world. His sermons and discourses were always written, but he delivered them so well that very few would have guessed that he had manuscript before him. With his writing in his hand he was easy, vigorous, and self-possessed; but when he had to speak extempore, a panic of fear shook him; he had neither ideas nor words, and he was completely lost.

It was simply a question of nerves with him, and whenever he knew beforehand that he was expected to speak extempore, the strain upon him was crueller than man can tell. The strain imposed now upon a body weakened by the past year's privations and anxiety could not have been crueller if he had been under sentence of death; and, indeed, life or death seemed to his overwrought nerves to hang upon the issue. If he failed, and he feared he would fail, fail signally, for he did not doubt but that the young and boisterous Mr. Lloyd was without nerves, and was a glib and self-con-

fident talker—then Upton was lost, and his wife was condemned for Heaven alone knew how long to grievous poverty, and his child to a lingering death. If he succeeded—but he had no reason to hope he would—then Upton was won, and with it life and health and happiness for those he loved.

It was Wednesday morning when he got the letter, and all that day he considered, with a frequent feeling of panic at the heart, and a constant fluttering of the nerves, what he could possibly do to insure success. He thought he would write down something on the subject of the debate, and commit it to memory. He had sat down and written a little, when he bethought him that he did not know when he would be called upon to speak, nor whether he might not have to expressly answer some one. He threw down the pen, and groaned in despair; there was nothing to be done; he must trust to the inspiration and self-possession of the moment.

When he went to bed, his sleep was a succession of ghastly nightmares. He dreamed that his wife and child were struggling and choking in a dark and slimy sea, that Mr. Lloyd stood aloof unconcernedly looking on, and that he, the husband and father, lay unable to stir hand or foot or tongue! Then he awoke with a sharp cry, trembling with dread and bathed in perspiration, and found, lo! it was but a dream!

So the night passed, and the day came with its constant wearing fear and anxiety. He could not eat, he could not drink, he could not rest; and thus the day passed, and the hour came when he must set out for the fatal meeting. As he passed along the street, people paused to glance at him: he appeared so pale and scared.

When he entered the lecture-room at Upton, he was met by his friend, the chairman of the committee, who looked at him and said:

"Don't you feel well, Mr. Murray? You look very faint and pale. Let me get you a glass of wine."

"No, thank you," said the minister. "I am really quite well."

"We shall have a good debate, I think," said his friend, then leading the way forward.

"I hope so," said the minister, "though I am afraid I can do little; I am the worst extempore speaker you can imagine."

"Is that so?" The friend turned quickly and considered him. "I should not have thought so. Ah, well, never mind."

But the minister felt that his friend's hope of his success was considerably shaken.

The chief persons of the assembly were gathered about a table at the upper end of the room. The chairman introduced the matter for debate; one man rose and spoke on the affirmative side, and another rose and spoke on the negative. The minister listened, but he scarce knew what was said; he drank great gulps of water to moisten his parched mouth (which, for all the water, remained obstinately dry), and he felt his hour was come. He glanced round him, but saw only shadows of men. One only he saw—the man opposite him, the very young and boisterous Mr. Lloyd, who clapped his hands and lustily said, "Hear, hear!" when anything was said of which he approved or which he wished to deride. The minister's eyes burned upon him till he seemed to assume as threatening demoniac proportions as the boastful and blatant Apollyon whom Christian fought in the Valley.

At length young Mr. Lloyd rose, large and hairy, and then the minister listened with all his ears. He missed nothing the young man uttered—none of the foolish and ignorant opinions, none of the coarse and awkward phrases—and as he listened, amazement seized him, and then anger, and he said to himself: "This is the man, this is the conceited and ignorant smatterer, who would supplant me, and rob my wife and child of health and happiness!" He rose at once in his anger to answer him, to smash and pulverize him. What he said in his anger he did not know; but when he had finished, he sat down and buried his face in his hands and was sure he had made an egregious ass of himself. He felt very faint and drank more water, and it was all over. In a

dazed and hurried fashion he said his adieux and went away to the train, convinced he should never see Upton more.

He had entered a carriage and sunk back with body exhausted, but with brain on fire; the train was starting, when the door was flung open, and Mr. Lloyd burst in and sat down opposite him.

"Halloa!" he cried. "I did not think to find you here. What a splendid debate it was, wasn't it?" He did not wait for an answer, but hurried on in his loquacity. "I think I woke them up. They need waking up, and I'll do it when I'm their minister."

It clearly did not occur to him that his vis-à-vis might be their minister instead; and Mr. Murray, in his exaggerated dread and humility, thought that the question who was to be minister must really have been settled before the young man left. Mr. Murray said nothing, but that did not embarrass Mr. Lloyd.

"I shall soon settle," he continued, "the hash of some of those frightened old fogies who want things to go on in the old, humdrum way. It's a fine place and a magnificent chapel, and can be made a popular cause; and I'll make it, too, when I'm among them. Good. rousing, popular stuff—that's the thing to make a success; don't you think so, Murray?"

"No doubt," said Murray, scarce knowing or caring what he said in his bitterness and despair; "only make noise enough."

Young Mr. Lloyd merely laughed boisterously, and Mr. Murray only kept saying to himself: "This is the man who has robbed me of my chance, and my wife and child of health and happiness! But for this ignorant, conceited, and incompetent braggart I should be minister!"

And incontrollable dislike—and in his nervous, overstrained condition, hatred even—rose in him against the young man.

As Lloyd went on with his ding-dong, maddening talk, Mr. Murray, who could have cried aloud in his pain and despair at the loss he believed he had endured, observed absently that the inner handle of the door

showed that the catch was open. The train slowed down, for some reason, in the middle of a tunnel, and Lloyd rose in his lusty, boisterous way, banged down the window, and looked out.

"These trains," quoth he, "are confoundedly slow."

Mr. Murray kept his eye on the brass handle of the door. It was a dangerous position for Mr. Lloyd; if he leaned too heavily, or if the train went on with a jerk, he was likely to be thrown out. Should he warn him? Should he say, "Take care; you may fall in your rashness"? Yet why did not the foolish, unobservant young man see for himself the condition of the door?

Still, the handle of the door fascinated the minister's eye, and he kept silence. At that moment the train started off again with a jerk and a screech; the door swung open, and Lloyd fell, and as the minister put out his hands and head to catch him, with a horrified "Oh!" he saw the fiery eye of a train rushing down upon him from the opposite direction. It came on with thunderous roar and passed, and the minister sank back in the carriage alone, and fainted!

IV.

He came to himself only outside the London terminus at which he had to arrive, when the train drew up, and a man came along for the collection of tickets. In a half-dazed condition (which the ticket-collector probably considered intoxication), he surrendered his ticket without a word, and then the train went on, and presently he was on the platform, stumbling out of the station on his way home, but no more in touch with the people and things he passed among than a man in a dream.

What had he done? What had he done? To what a depth of misery and infamy had he cast himself? It was impossible to sound the black bottom of it.

"I have slain a man to my wounding; a young man to my hurt."

The old words rose in his mind unbidden—rose and sank, rose and sank again. He felt that the young man must be lying crushed across those rails. And it was his doing; he had not warned the young man of his

danger; he had consented to his death, and, therefore, he had killed him! Oh, the horror! Oh, the pity of it!

When he reached his lonely lodging, it was late, and he was dull and tired. He was conscious of having walked a long way round, and to and fro, but where he did not know. The strain was now off his nerves, and dull, dead misery was upon him. He mechanically undressed, and went to bed and sank to sleep at once; but his sleep was unrefreshing; it was troubled all the night through with alarms and terrors, with screeching and roaring trains, and falling bodies; and when in the morning he was fully awake, his misery settled upon him like a dense fog of death.

The morning postman brought a letter from his wife. She was in good spirits, and the boy was improving rapidly. Then tears—bitter, bitter tears!—came to his relief, and he sobbed in agony. What had possessed him? What fiend of anger and hate had entered into him to make him commit that deed? He was aghast at the atrocious possibilities of his own nature. He felt as if he could not look in the face of his wife again, or again venture to take her in his arms. Would she not shrink from him with horror when she knew? And would not his boy—his little Jim!—when he grew up (if he ever grew up) be ashamed of the father who had so dishonored his name?

"Oh, my God!" he cried in his misery and grief. "Let me bear the utmost punishment of my sin, but spare them! Punish not the innocent with the guilty! Let my dear wife and children live in peace and honor before Thee!"

He could not eat a morsel of breakfast—he had scarcely tasted food or drink for two whole days—and he could not rest in his lodgings. He wandered out with his load of misery upon him. He was a man who seldom read the newspapers, and he did not think of buying one now, nor did it even occur to him to scan the contents-bills set outside the news-venders' shops. He merely wandered on and round, revolving the horrible business that had brought him so low, and then he wandered back in the afternoon faint with exhaustion.

When he entered the sitting-room, he saw a letter set for him on the mantelpiece. It was from his friend at Upton, and it declared with delight that, after the stirring debate on Thursday evening, he (Murray) had been "unanimously elected" minister. That was the unlooked-for stroke of retribution! To think that he had committed his sin—nay, his crime!—in headlong wantonness! To think that at the very moment when he had committed it he was being elected to the place which he had believed the young man had been chosen to fill! Bitter, bitter was his punishment beginning to be; for, of course, he could not, with the stain of crime on his soul, if not on his hands, accept the place—not even to save his wife and child from want.

The writer further said that it was desired that he (Murray) should occupy next Sunday the pulpit which was henceforward to be his. What was to be done? Clearly but one thing—at all costs to occupy the pulpit on Sunday morning, to lay bare his soul to the people who had "unanimously" invited him, and to tell them he could never more be minister either there or elsewhere. He sat thus with the letter in his hand, when the door opened and his wife came in with the boy asleep in her arms; he had omitted to write to her since Wednesday. He rose to his feet and stood back against the fire-place.

"Oh, my poor dear!" she cried, when she saw him. "How terribly ill you look. Why didn't you tell me? I felt there was something wrong with you when I had no word." She carefully laid the sleeping child on the couch and returned to embrace her husband.

"Don't, Mary!" said he, keeping her back.

"Oh, James, dear!" she said, clasping her hands. "What has gone wrong? You look worn to death!"

"Everything's gone wrong, Mary!" he answered. "My whole life's gone wrong!"

"What do you mean?" she asked in breathless terror. "What have you in your hand?"

He held out to her the letter, and sat down and covered his face.

"Oh, but this is good news, James!" she exclaimed. "You are elected minister at Upton!"

"I can't go, Mary! I can no longer be minister there or anywhere!"

"James, my darling!" She knelt beside him, and put her arms about him. "Something has happened to you! Tell me what it is!" But he held his peace. "Remember, my dear, that we are all the world to each other; remember that when we were married, we said we should never have any secret from each other! Tell me your trouble, my dear!"

He could not resist her appeal: he told her the whole story.

"My poor, dear love!" she cried. "How terribly tried you have been! And I did not know it!"

"And you don't shrink from me, Mary?" said he.

"Shrink from you, my dear husband?" she demanded. "How can you ask me? Oh, my darling!"

She kissed his hands and his face, and covered him with her love and wept over him.

They sat in silence for a while, and then he told her what he proposed to do. She agreed with him that that was the proper thing.

"We must do the first thing that is right, whatever may happen to ourselves. Write and say that you do not feel you can take more than the morning service. I'll go with you, and you shall do as you say—and the rest is with God."

Thus it was arranged. And on Sunday morning they set off together for Upton, leaving the boy in the care of the landlady. They had no word to say to each other in the train, but they held close each other's hand. They avoided greetings, and introductions, and felicitations save from one or two by keeping close in the vestry till the hour struck and the attendant came to usher the minister to the pulpit. He went out and up the pulpit stairs with a firm step, but his face was very pale, his lips were parched, and his heart was thumping hard, till he felt as if it would burst. The first part of the service was gone through, and the minister rose to deliver his sermon. He gave out his text, "And Cain

said unto the Lord, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear!' " and glanced around upon the congregation, who sat up wondering what was to come of that. He repeated it, and happening to look down, saw seated immediately below the pulpit, looking as well and self-satisfied as usual, the young man whom he had imagined crushed in the tunnel! The revulsion of feeling was too great; the minister put his hand to his head, with a cry something between a sob and sigh, tottered and fell.

There was a flutter and a rustle of dismay throughout the congregation. The minister's wife was up the pulpit stairs in an instant, and she was followed by the chairman and the young Mr. Lloyd. Between them they carried the minister down into the vestry, where a few others presently assembled.

"Will you run for a doctor, Mr. Lloyd?" said the chairman.

Hearing the name "Lloyd," and seeing a man in minister's attire, Mrs. Murray guessed the truth at once.

"I think," said she, "there is no need for a doctor; my husband has only fainted. He has been terribly worried all the year, and the last week or two, especially, has told on him."

"I thought the other night," said the chairman, "that he looked ill."

"He has not been well since," said she; and she continued, turning to Mr. Lloyd, "I believe he was the more upset that he thought an accident had happened to you in the train, Mr. Lloyd."

"Oh," said the young man, "it was nothing. It really served me right for leaning against a door that was unlatched. I picked myself up all right."

The chairman and the others stared; they clearly had heard nothing of that.

"He is coming round," said the wife. "If some one will kindly get me a cab, I'll take him home."

* * * * * *

That is the story of the unconfessed crime of the minister of Upton Chapel, who is to-day known as a gentle, sweet, and somewhat shy man, good to all, and especially tender and patient with all wrong-doers.

Alphonse Daudet gives us in this touching sketch a vivid picture of provincial life in France. It is translated for ROMANCE by Lucy Martin.

AN AGED COUPLE.

"A LETTER, Father Azan?"

"Yes, Monsieur, from Paris."

He was very proud that it came from Paris, this good Father Azan,—but so was I. Something told me that this Parisian intruder from the rue Jean Jacques, falling unexpectedly on the table so early in the morning, was going to make me lose my whole day. I was not mistaken, as you may see for yourself.

"You must do me a service, my friend. Close your mill for a day, and go immediately to Eygnières. It is a large village about three or four leagues from you,—a good walk. On arriving, ask for the Convent of the Orphans. The first house after the Convent is a little low one, with gray shutters and a small garden behind. Enter without knocking; the door is always open,—and on entering cry loudly, 'Bonjour, good people, I am Maurice's friend.' Then you will see two little old people,—oh, so old, old, superannuated!—stretch forth their hands to you from their arm-chairs, and you will embrace them for me with all your heart, as though they were your own. They will talk of nothing but me. They will relate a thousand foolish things, which you must listen to without laughing. You will not laugh?

"They are my grandparents, two beings of whom I am the life, and who have not seen me in ten years. Ten years is a long time, but Paris holds me, and their great age keeps them. They are so old that, if they should come to see me, they would fall apart on the way.

"Happily you can go down there, my dear miller, and in embracing them, they will perhaps almost believe that it is I. I have spoken to them so often of ourselves and of our good friendship which——"

The deuce take the friendship! It so happened that this morning was most delightful, but not for walking. There was too much wind and too much sun, a real Provence day. When this confounded letter arrived, I had already chosen a nook between two rocks, and I had dreamed of staying there all day like a lizard, drinking in the sunlight and listening to the singing of the pines. But now what was I to do? I locked the mill, swearing a little, and put the key in the cat-hole. My stick, my pipe, and I have started.

I arrived at Eygnières about two o'clock. The village was deserted; everybody was in the fields. Grasshoppers were singing drowsily in the elms of the courts, white with dust. There was, to be sure, a donkey sunning himself in front of the mayor's house, and a flock of pigeons on the fountain in front of the church; but no one to show me the Orphanage. Fortunately, an old fairy appeared to me all of a sudden, squatting in the corner of her door, spinning. I told her what I was looking for, and as she was a very powerful fairy, all she did was to raise her distaff, and the Convent of the Orphans loomed up in front of me,—a great dingy, black house, very proud of the old red sandstone cross with a Latin inscription upon it, which surmounted the portal.

Just beyond this house, I perceived a smaller one, with gray shutters and a back garden. I recognized it at once, and entered without knocking. I shall see all my life that long corridor, so fresh and clean, the wall painted rose-color, the little garden at the end, trembling through the light-colored blind. It seemed to me that I must be in the house of some old bailiff of the time of Sedaine.

At the end of the passage to the left, through an open door, one heard the tic-tac of a great clock and a child's voice, the voice of a child at school who reads, stopping at each syllable: "Then—Saint—I—ré—née—cried—'I—am—the—wheat—of—the—Lord.—I—must—be—ground—by—the—teeth—of—those—an—i—mals.'"

I approached the door softly and looked in.

In the calm and half-light of a little room, a little,

rosy-cheeked old man, wrinkled to the tips of his fingers, slept in a great arm-chair, his mouth open, his hands on his knees. At his feet, a small girl, dressed in blue, in a large cape and round cap, the costume of the orphans, read the life of Saint Irénée from a book bigger than herself. This reading of miracles had operated on the entire house. The old man slept in his chair, the flies on the ceiling, the canaries in their cage over by the window. The fat clock snored tic-tac, tic-tac. There was nothing awake in the whole room but a wide band of light which fell white and straight between the closed blinds, full of living sparkles and microscopic waltzes.

In the midst of the general drowsiness, the child continued her reading with a solemn air: "Pres—ent—ly —two—li—ons—sprang —on — him—and—de—voured —him."

It was at this juncture that I entered. St. Irénée's lions precipitating themselves into the room could not have produced a greater bewilderment than I did. It was a regular theatre-stroke! The little one gave a cry, the big book fell, the canaries and the flies woke up, the clock struck, the old man sat up with a start, thoroughly scared, and I, a little disconcerted, paused on the threshold, crying loudly, "Bonjour, good people! I am Maurice's friend."

Ah, then, if you had seen him, the poor old fellow, if you had seen him come toward me with outstretched arms, embrace me, press my hands, then run wandering round the room saying, "Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!"

All the wrinkles of his face smiled. He was red. He stammered: "Ah, Monsieur—ah! Monsieur!"

Then he went to the other side, calling, "Mamette!"

A door opens, there is a little mouse-trot in the hall, —it is Mamette. Nothing could have been prettier than this little old woman, with her shell-like bonnet, her Carmelite frock, and the embroidered handkerchief which she held in her hand to honor me, after the old style. It was a touching fact that these two resembled one another. With one turn and a bonnet, he could have been called "Mamette," too. The real Mamette

must have wept a great deal during her life, for she was still more wrinkled than he. Like him, she had an orphan near her, a little guardian in a blue pelerine, who never left her. To see these poor old people protected by the two orphans, was the most affecting thing imaginable.

On entering, Mamette had commenced by making me a low reverence, but with a word, the old man cut it in two. "It is Maurice's friend!"

Then, behold, she trembles, she weeps, loses her handkerchief, becomes red in the face, even redder than he. These old people, who have but a drop of blood in their veins, how it goes to their heads at the least emotion!

"Quick, quick, a chair!" says Mamette to her little one.

"Open the blinds!" cries the old man to his.

And, each taking me by a hand, they trot over to the window, which has been thrown wide open so that they may see me better. The arm-chairs are pushed up, I install myself between them on a camp-stool, and with the little blue pelerines behind us, the questions begin.

"How is he? What is he doing? Why doesn't he come? Is he contented?" And so on for hours.

I replied as best I could to all their questions, giving the details which I knew about my friend, and impudently inventing those I did not know, especially avoiding the avowal that I had never noticed whether his windows shut firmly, or of what color the wall-paper of his room was.

"The wall-paper of his room! It is blue, madame, —light-blue with garlands."

"Really!" said Mamette, much affected, and turning toward her husband. "He is such a good child!"

"O yes, a very good child," echoed the other with enthusiasm.

All the time that I talked, they had between them little shakings of the head, little cackles, winkings of the eye, and all sorts of knowing airs; or perhaps the old man bent over to say, "Speak a little more distinctly, she is a trifle hard of hearing." And she from her side,

"A little louder, I beg of you. He does not hear very well."

Then I raised my voice, and they both thanked me with a smile; and in the faded smiles of these two leaning toward me, searching the depths of my eyes for the image of their Maurice, I was moved to find this same image, vague, veiled, almost undiscernible, as though I saw my friend smile on me a long way off through a fog.

All of a sudden the old man straightened up in his arm-chair. "Now I think of it, Mamette, perhaps he has not had his breakfast!" And Mamette startled stretches her arms toward heaven and rejoins, "Not had breakfast! *Grand Dieu!*" I thought they were still speaking of Maurice, and I was going to reply that the good child never waited later than noon to put himself at table. But no, they were speaking of me,—and such a clearing of the deck as there was when I owned that I was still fasting.

"Quick, the cover, little blues! The table in the middle of the room, the Sunday cloth, the flowered dishes. And don't laugh so much, if you please, and suppose we hurry a bit."

Of course, they hurried. Hardly the time to have broken three plates had elapsed, and the breakfast was served. "A nice little breakfast," said Mamette in conducting me to the table. "Only you will be all alone. We have already eaten this morning."

These poor old people! No matter what time you find them, they have always eaten in the morning. Mamette's nice little breakfast was a glass of milk, some dates and a *barquette* (something like a meat-pie), enough to nourish her and her canaries at least eight days. And I unaided made an end of all these provisions! Ah! what indignation then was felt around the table! How the little blues whispered in nudging each other with their elbows, and over there in their cage the canaries had the air of saying, "Oh, who is this Monsieur who is eating the whole *barquette?*"

I did eat it all, and almost without observing it, occupied as I was in looking around me in this light, peaceful room, where lingered an odor of old things.

There were especially two little beds from which I could not take away my eyes. These beds, almost cradles, I fancied that I could see in the morning at daylight, when they are still hidden under their fringed curtains. The bells ring three o'clock. It is the hour when all old people wake up.

"Are you asleep, Mamette?"

"No, my dear."

"Isn't Maurice a good child?"

"Yes, a very good child."

And I imagined thus a whole conversation only from having seen the two little beds side by side.

During this time a terrible drama was going on at the other end of the room before the cupboard. The question was how to reach up to the top shelf to a certain jar of brandied cherries, which had awaited Maurice for ten years and which they wished to open for me. Notwithstanding the supplications of Mamette, the old man had insisted on getting the cherries himself, and standing on a chair, to the great terror of his wife, he tried to reach up. Imagine the picture—the old man, who trembles and hoists himself up; the two little blues clutching at the chair; Mamette behind breathless, with arms outspread; and over all a slight perfume of bergamot, which exhales from the great piles of red linen in the cupboard.

It was charming.

At length, after many efforts, they succeeded in getting the famous jar out of the cupboard, along with an old embossed silver cup which Maurice had had when he was little. They filled it to the brim with cherries for me; Maurice loved cherries so well! And in serving me the old man said in my ear with an air of envy, "You are very lucky, you are, to be able to eat these. My wife made them. You are going to taste something delicious."

Alas, his wife had made them, but she had forgotten the sugar. What can one expect! We become forgetful in getting old. Your cherries were atrocious, my poor Mamette. But that did not prevent me from eating them to the end without wincing.

The repast finished, I arose to bid my hosts adieu. They would gladly have kept me longer to chat about the good child, but the day was declining, the mill was far away, and I had to hasten. The old man got up when I did. "Mamette, my coat! I wish to conduct him to the square."

It is certain that inwardly Mamette thought it already a trifle too late to conduct me to the square, but she did not let it appear. Only in helping him on with his coat, a fine one the color of Spanish tobacco with mother-of-pearl buttons, I heard the dear creature say to him softly,

"You will not be out too late, will you?"

And he, with a malicious little air, "Hi! Hi! I don't know,—perhaps——"

Thereupon they looked at one another laughingly, and the little blues laughed to see them, and in their corner the canaries laughed in their manner. *Entre nous*, I believe that the odor of the cherries had affected them all.

Night fell as we went out, the grandfather and I. A little blue followed us from a distance to bring him back; but he did not see her, and was proud to walk with his arm in mine like a man.

Mamette, beaming, saw this from her doorstep, and looked at us with pretty little noddings of the head which seemed to say, "All the same, he still walks, my good man!"

Clever tricks with diamonds are often the theme of the story-tellers. The hero of the following anonymous tale was evidently a past-master in the art, and his adventure eclipses, perhaps, any other of the sort ever described.

PASTE OR DIAMOND?

"Yes; it belonged to poor Turenne," said Wyse, as he pulled the ring from his finger and handed it to us for inspection. "He left it to me by his will, and I keep it in memory of one of the best actors and one of the best men I ever knew."

Meanwhile the ring was passing from hand to hand, and the universal verdict was that none of us had ever seen a finer stone.

"Turenne was rather a wealthy man," said one of our little circle, "but I didn't think he could have afforded or would have cared to spend so much money on an ornament as that ring must have cost."

"He wanted it for some special purpose which afterward fell through," rejoined Wyse. "I know all about it, for I bought it for him myself. I had quite a little adventure on the occasion."

"Tell us the story," we cried.

"Well," said Wyse, taking a pull at his cigar and settling himself back in his chair, "it is a good many years ago now. I was playing high-comedy characters at the old Princess's, and as I had been working very hard, I set off for the south of France as soon as the season closed. It happened that Turenne (who had proved himself a true friend to me) wanted a good diamond for a purpose I needn't trouble you with; and before I set out on my travels I told him that, if I met with a particularly fine one at a moderate price, I would buy it for him, and he, being too busy at the time to attend to the matter himself, gladly consented. I was staying at Nice, when there came to the hotel one of those tall, loquacious Americans who are now so plentiful all over

Europe. There seemed to be nothing objectionable about the man, except that he was vulgar and eternally talking about the U-nited States.

"On the evening after his arrival a few of us happened to be sitting in the billiard-room, and by some chance or other the conversation turned on the subject of diamonds.

"'I don't know much about the business myself,' said the American, 'but I'm told by good judges that thar's about as good a stone as you'll see in a day's round.'

"So saying, he drew a ring from his finger and handed it to me, who happened to sit next him. It was, indeed, a magnificent brilliant, set in a ring of a peculiar pattern. When the lamp was removed, it seemed to gather into itself the light out of the semi-darkness, and glittered like a bit of broken glass in the sunshine. 'What is it worth?' asked one of the men present.

"'That I can hardly tell you,' answered the American, 'seein' a friend at Buenos sent it to me direct, and I had it cut myself. But I'm tired of it, and seldom wear it.'

"'Would you sell it?' I inquired, out of curiosity.

"'I might,' answered the American, 'especially as this European trip is cleaning me out faster than I expected; and I don't want to go home to Vermont skinned as neatly as a cod. Yes, you may have that diamond for eighty pounds of your money, stranger, and dirt cheap at that, I should say.'

"I looked at the stone again, and the longer I looked at it, the more I liked it. Eighty pounds was quite as much as my friend wished to pay for a stone, but what if I could get one for him worth a hundred for eighty pounds?

"'Will you trade?' he asked.

"'I am not a judge of diamonds myself,' said I, returning the stone to its owner. 'I'm afraid I couldn't buy without taking a lapidary's opinion as to its value.'

"'All right,' said the American carelessly, 'if you care to hev it, we can go round to a jeweller's in the morning. And if he puts a lower value on the stone

than I did, you can hev it at the price he names, if you like to buy. I can't say fairer than that.'

"The offer did, indeed, seem a very fair one, and I went to bed that night determined to secure the jewel for my friend if the expert reported favorably on it.

"Next morning the American and I strolled down to the shop of the chief jeweller of the town; and when we entered the place, I first of all paid my footing by purchasing some trifle, and then, taking the ring from the hand of my new acquaintance, I placed it before the jeweller and asked him to give me an opinion as to its value.

"'A ver' fine stone, sir,' said the Frenchman; 'I congratulate you on the possession of so fine a diamond.'

"'It is not mine; it belongs to my friend here.'

"'Ah! if that be the case, then I congratulate heem,' said the polite tradesman.

"'What do you suppose it is worth?' I asked.

"'Oh, it is difficult to say,' said the Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders. 'Von gentleman sinks von price mor' for him, anotter sinks——'

"'Yes; but what would you give if you were to buy it? Would you give eighteen hundred francs?'

"The jeweller did not reply for a few seconds. He popped his microscope once more into his eye, held the ring up to the light, examined the setting, and fell to making elaborate calculations with a pencil on a sheet of blotting-paper.

"'I do not often buy such large stones, but I will give you two thousand five hundred francs for this one,' he finally said to the American.

"The Yankee did not reply; and the Frenchman, assuming that his offer was accepted, placed the ring on a little ledge behind him and opened his desk for his check-book.

"'Not so fast,' said Brother Jonathan; 'the diamond's not for sale.'

"'Two thousand six hundred francs,' was the Frenchman's reply.

"The American shook his head.

"'Seven hundred—eight hundred!'

"'No!'

"'Nine hundred—three thousand francs! That is my last offer. Pause, I beg of you, monsieur, before you refuse it. It is a large sum—three thousand francs,' and, as if he were convinced that no one could refuse such a price, he put the stone once more among his own treasures and again turned round for his check-book.

"'Thunder!' exclaimed the Yankee: 'what do you take me for? I tell you I can't and I won't sell you the ring. It was as good as sold to this British gentleman last night, and it isn't mine to sell any more. Give me the ring.'

"So saying the American took the ring rather sharply from the jeweller's hand and replaced it on his finger. The Frenchman next made me an offer for the trinket; but as I had not bought it for myself, of course I could not sell it, and we left the shop.

"My mind was clear now as to the prudence of giving eighty pounds for the diamond. I had heard the best jeweller in the town offer three thousand francs, or a hundred and twenty pounds, for it.

"'Well, I must say you have acted most honorably,' said I to the American when we reached the street. 'After all, a bargain can't be all on one side, and I had never promised to buy the ring, so you had a perfect legal right to sell it to the Frenchman.'

"'You needn't say no more, stranger,' said the Yankee, as if he were tired of the subject. 'You can hev the stone now, if you choose, at the price we fixed on last night,' and he held the ring out to me.

"But I had to get my letters of credit cashed, and I agreed to meet the American in the billiard-room in an hour's time and conclude the transaction.

"No one was in the billiard-room when I entered it (for it was still early in the day) except the American, who was standing by the empty fireplace. The transfer did not occupy more than five seconds, and the Yankee immediately proposed drinks. These being discussed, we separated, and I saw no more of my friend from the States that day.

"That evening after dinner I happened to be sitting not far from the fireplace in the billiard-room, when I noticed a small round object lying just inside the marble fender. Curious to know what it was, I left my seat and picked it up. It was a jeweller's ring-case—not an uncommon article, certainly, yet hardly the sort of thing one often sees on the floor of a billiard-room.

"Suddenly I remembered that the American had been standing close to the spot where I found it when, earlier in the day, I had exchanged my two thousand francs' worth of notes for his diamond. An uncomfortable feeling crossed my mind. What did he want with a ring-case? He had been wearing the ring he sold to me. He might have kept a case for it, of course, and might have thrown it away when he parted with the ring; yet that seemed an unusual sort of a thing for a man to do.

"I opened the case. The maker's name was inscribed in gilt letters inside the lid, and the address given was Paris. 'Paris!' said I to myself. 'He said the ring had been bought in Brazil.' There was no real ground for suspicion, yet I was uneasy. I went upstairs and took out the ring. The pattern—you see it is a peculiar one—I remembered well. Somehow I judged, or fancied, that the diamond did not shine as brightly as it had done the night before.

"Next morning I took the ring to a second jeweller and asked him his opinion as to its value. He examined the diamond carefully, and laid it down on the glass case before him with one contemptuous word:

"'Paste!'

"'Paste!' I echoed. 'Impossible!'

"'Certainly paste, and a very good imitation,' he replied, turning away.

"My heart sank within me. Eighty pounds was a sum I could ill afford to lose. It meant a summary end to my holidays, not to speak of embarrassments that would last some time.

"With a faint hope that the second expert had been mistaken, I took the ring to the jeweller who had offered the American three thousand francs for it.

"He seemed pleased to see me, but as soon as he had glanced at the ring, his face changed.

"'This is not the same ring you showed me yesterday,' he said in a tone that made it plain that he thought I meant to cheat him. 'At least,' he added, 'it is not the same stone. This is not a stone at all; it is paste.'

"'So I have been told,' I said sadly. 'Are you sure the jewel I showed you yesterday was a genuine diamond?'

"'I am certain of it,' he answered.

"The honorable conduct (as I had thought it) of the stranger in refusing to sell to the jeweller was now intelligible. The jeweller meant to keep the real stone. It was not difficult to see how the fraud had been managed. The swindler had had two rings made exactly alike of a striking and peculiar pattern. In one of them he had placed a genuine and very fine diamond. This was the decoy. In the other he had put a false diamond, closely resembling in size and shape the genuine one in the first ring. The one he wore and offered to sell was the true stone. When he got it back from the jeweller, he had kept it and had given me the sham one in exchange for my eighty pounds. What was I to do?

"The first thing was to ascertain whether my friend had left the hotel. Of course he had—on the afternoon of the previous day: still, the scent was so hot that I fancied I should have little difficulty in tracing him. But when I found him, my difficulties would only begin. Of course he would swear that he had sold me the ring with the stone which the jeweller had declared to be genuine. I might, conceivably, have substituted paste for the true gem as well as he. In any case, when I thought of the difficulty of getting back my money from an American wandering about Europe, my heart sank within me. Even if the police consented to help me, taking my word against his, even if the rogue were convicted, how was I to recover the two thousand francs?

"These thoughts passed through my mind as I hurried back to the hotel. Certainly the prospect was gloomy enough.

"I easily ascertained that the American had taken

the train for Paris the day before, and I determined to follow him at once. I did not despair of finding him, as he would probably put up at one of the good hotels.

"On the way up to Paris I could think of nothing but my loss. This fellow I saw had hit upon a very safe and profitable method of swindling. In nine cases out of ten the cheated man would not discover his loss for years after he had seen the last of the American, if, indeed, the trick was discovered at all; for the paste was quite good enough to deceive a casual observer, and the owner would, of course, be actuated by a profound faith in his diamond straight from Brazil. Had it not been for the incident of my finding the ring-case, which the rogue had accidentally dropped, I should in all probability have unwittingly cheated poor Turenne out of his money, and he might afterward have been supposed to be trying to palm off a spurious diamond for a real gem. In all probability the fellow made a living—and a very good one—by going about Europe and practising this trick.

"This idea sent off my thoughts on a new track, and by the time I had arrived in Paris I had decided on my course of action.

"First of all, I made careful inquiries at the railway station as to a tall American who had arrived from Nice by a certain train on a preceding day; and, by the help of some five-franc pieces, I found the cabman who had driven him to his hotel—the Continental.

"This being ascertained, I chose a quiet, unpretending hotel for myself near one of the railway stations. Then I emptied the contents of a light bag on my bed, and, taking it empty in my hand, went to a theatrical costumer's and saying I intended to take part in some private theatricals, I hired the costume of a French abbé. It was a part I had often played in a piece that had a pretty long run in London some eight years ago, and I had little doubt that I should be able to acquit myself in it fairly well. I got the proper dress, wig, powder, and everything complete, and having put all the articles into my bag, I went to one of the railway-

stations and took a return ticket for a station a little way out in the country.

"To my disgust I found it impossible to get a compartment to myself; the train was too crowded, but I reflected that the trains returning to Paris would probably be much less crowded in the afternoon than those going into the country.

"In this supposition I was right. I hung about the suburban railway-station till a return train was about to start. It was nearly empty, and a *douceur* to the guard secured me the privacy I needed. By the time I returned to Paris I was a stout, benevolent-looking French priest, in comfortable circumstances. My suit of tweeds I had placed in my bag, which I took care to leave at the railway station. Then I made the best of my way to the Hotel Continental.

"I was just in time for the table d'hôte, and as I took my seat, I noticed with great satisfaction that my transatlantic friend was sitting not very far off, and that he had not a suspicion of my identity. Nothing, I knew, could be done until after dinner, so I waited through the tedious procession of courses as patiently as I could, and when at last they came to an end, I followed the American and a little group of men who surrounded him to the smoking-room. It was not exactly the place for a priest, but I could not help that.

"I sat down by a little round table near the American, but slightly behind him, so as to be able to hear the conversation without joining in it unless I wished. From time to time I offered a remark, speaking, of course, in French, to the man who sat next me, but for the most part I smoked my cigar and sipped my coffee in silence.

"As I expected, it was not long before diamonds became the subject of conversation.

"'I don't know much about diamonds myself,' said the American, speaking in his native tongue, 'but I'm told by good judges that thar's about as good a stone as you'll see anywhere round.' (Almost exactly the phrases, I said to myself, which the fellow used to me at Nice!)

"'You kin take a look at it,' he added carelessly,

drawing off the ring and handing it to one of the group. I bent forward, so as to see more clearly what was going on. One after another the men who were sitting near examined and admired the ring. The man next me was the last to look at it.

"'A friend I hev at Buenos Ayres sent it to me, and I had it cut myself,' said the American.

"At this point I noticed that my neighbor had finished his examination of the diamond, and I touched him, intimating that I too would like to have a look at it. He handed it to me as a matter of course.

"It was the very ring which had been exhibited in the same way at Nice. I had the imitation one which had been palmed off upon me ready in my hand, and under pretence of trying the effect of the gem on my finger, I easily substituted the one for the other, slipped the false ring on my finger, admired it, as in duty bound, and then, pulling it off, handed it back to my neighbor, who in turn gave it to the American.

"I put the real diamond, which I had secured, into my pocket, and finished my coffee hastily, just as Brother Jonathan was making an appointment with a rich young Frenchman to meet at the shop of a fashionable jeweller next morning and take his opinion on the value of the gem.

"'And since it has taken your fancy,' said the unsuspicious American, 'you shall hev it for the same sum the jeweller offers me for it. I can't say fairer than that, now, can I?'

"I went back to the railway-station, got my bag, changed my hat and coat in the waiting-room, slipped into the hotel, and next day set off for Cannes.

"My only regret was that I was unable to make a study of the American's face when the Paris jeweller put a price on his beautiful diamond next morning."

One of the most remarkable illustrations of the unwillingness of successive generations to learn from their predecessors is shown in the elopement craze, which seems to run on in a pretty even development throughout the ages. It would seem, however, that whoever should read "Helen's" love-story, as depicted below by Kate Richmond, would think several times before eloping. The tale first appeared in the *Overland Monthly*.

HELEN'S FOLLY.

BEFORE she was eighteen, Helen Tryon married for love. At twenty-five she found herself bankrupt of everything. She lived, and with the stubborn tenacity of her nature she braced herself to endure existence, but she neither hoped nor feared anything. She ate and drank and slept, the mechanical routine of the days repeated itself, but she had come to a dead stop. She had lost all courage, all faith: a bare, blank wall faced her. There was nothing more to be enjoyed nor suffered. She had had everything and lost everything.

If she had consciously recognized all this, there might have been some hope of reaction. When one appreciates the dramatic effect of circumstances, a new interest in new circumstances is apt to be not far off. But Helen was capable of no such attitude toward herself. One saw it in her face—dark and thin and changeless as a statue's. She had great dark eyes, but they never varied their dreamy, unheeding look. Her voice was low, soft and monotonous, and yet she was not at all a dreadful person to live with. It was impossible that her story should not cast its shadow over the household, but when it was once settled that Helen's experience had exempted her from all the ordinary rules that bound the others, matters adjusted themselves, as they always do, and the happy current of commonplace living flowed around her undisturbed.

She was slender and graceful, strong, too, as these slight-built New-England women are often enough.

At seventeen she had not been handsome, but she had had that air of any possibility of beauty which is better than defined prettiness. She was shy, reserved and cold, with the positive, repelling power of strong natures, and with the Puritan traditions of training superadded. Under it she was wilful, headstrong, and passionate, never capable of seeing more than one side of a subject, and always glorifying that side with the whole force of a tropical imagination rigidly repressed and totally ungoverned.

It was just then that in a school vacation she visited a friend in one of the shadiest and oldest and steadiest of Connecticut villages. While she was in the house there came out of the vague Southwest a young man who claimed blood relationship with the family. It was just in the days when Bret Harte's heroes stood foremost in the ranks of popularity. The inborn rebellion against conventionalities in Helen's blood caught eagerly at the picturesque freedom and wildness of these characterizations. She could not realize that one redeeming trait may not suffice to make a whole life tolerable. Payne Morse was as handsome in his blond way as a young demigod. He had the slow, soft speech of the plainsman; he swore no oaths, in her presence, at least; he conformed to the requirements of a community in which a revolver and a lariat rope were alike uncalled-for and outlandish, with a good-natured toleration that had in Helen's eyes immense piquancy and magnanimity. Then he rode like a centaur, and the accomplishment was so novel in that corner of the hills that it seemed almost like something unlawful and ungodly. Somebody in a wild fit of speculation had shipped East a train-load of mustangs, in the illusive hope that they might be broken for use among the quartz-ledges. They kicked, they bucked, they sat on their haunches and squealed their wrongs aloud in every variation of the equine tongue, and at last Payne Morse was appealed to, as being only a little less savage than the mustangs, to see if he could do anything with them.

He found himself able, and apparently enjoyed the

work. His fearless riding, his quiet, merciless mastership of the untamed brutes, completed the conquest of Helen's fancy.

That was in leafy June; in September she went back to school. A month later she left the recitation-room one day, put on her hat, walked out of the house and to the railroad station. In the next city Payne Morse awaited her. They were married within the hour, and before sunset they told the story in the Tryon sitting-room.

Helen was not defiant. She was quiet, rather sad, but no more repentant or regretful than a block of marble. Mr. Tryon recognized the trait by sympathy, perhaps. He looked at the two as they stood in the middle of the room. Mother and sister had withdrawn a little; Helen's will was a thing that most of the household did withdraw from. She stood by her husband's side, slight, erect, her hand on his arm, but not leaning on him at all.

"You are aware, sir," Mr. Tryon said, "that this child is a minor,—by the law I could take her from you."

"But you will not?" The question was half assertion.

"No, I shall not. She has chosen; she must learn life in her own way; I shall try and make no difference between her and the others,—and may the Lord have mercy on you both," he added, half under his breath.

For a month the two staid under the home roof. Helen's mother put down intuition and instinct with a strong hand, magnified the superficial charms of the man, and was able at last to say: "It was irregular—improper—wrong, but we can't help liking him."

Helen's sisters—two of them—really did like him. The careless, easy, unconscious dash of his manner, his unfailing, elaborate, if somewhat florid courtesy, the air of vague romance that seemed to make the atmosphere in which he breathed, all appealed to their ideal of the chivalric and poetic. He did not talk much of himself, but his half-impersonal stories of wild adventures and reckless daring opened vistas into a limitless wonderland. Mr. Tryon treated him politely always, and never said a word for or against him.

Then Helen took the few thousands of dollars for which by right she should have waited till she had reached her majority, and went with her husband into the then half-savage depths of the Colorado cattle-ranges.

For four years her letters came regularly. From the very first there had been little of personal record in them. What she hoped or feared, enjoyed or suffered, no one had any way of guessing. It was the kindest thing to read nothing more than appeared on the surface. But at the end of that time Payne Morse was tried and sentenced to confinement for life for participation in a daring train-robbery. She simply sent the papers in which the matter was recorded.

Mr. Tryon followed his telegram with all the speed possible. And so Helen Morse came home again, a statuesque shadow of herself,—she and her baby, of whom the whole family made an object of worship.

One more blow remained to fall. A year later the baby died. The newspaper that told its death told, too, the death of its father, shot while trying to escape from the prison in which he was confined.

Helen wore black after that,—perhaps for her baby's death; perhaps for the memory of the man who had treated her with a cruelty she never told nor hinted at; perhaps for herself, because she had outlived everything. At any rate she went in sombre garments, and no one questioned or remarked.

And so up to this night,—the night of her twenty-fifth birthday, when they were all sitting about the tea-table and talking of Harry's prospects. Harry had bought a share in a Texas ranch, and he and his partner were going to rough it alone in their cabin among the grass and sheep. Harry was enthusiastic, forestalling a little and unconsciously the character he was to assume by-and-by.

"Now, Mr. Micawber!" Grace said, mockingly, "Mother, you ought to give him a tin plate and cup, and keep silver forks out of his sight. And Harry, you'll have to cut the acquaintance of boiled shirts, unless you boil them yourself, and then you'll have spasms over the starch."

Helen looked up, and said in her slow, impassive way: "Why couldn't I go and keep house for you, Harry?"

Silence fell about the table. The idea had never presented itself to one of them, but now all at once it did not seem so impracticable. No fancy of Helen's ever did for Helen.

"I have seen something of the life," she said. "There is nothing in it that I cannot face. I do not mind the solitude, and a house is more comfortable with a woman in it."

And so it was settled. She went about her preparations with a straightforward, unhurrying readiness that admitted of little assistance. In ten days the brother and sister started, and the family felt somehow as if there had been a death, as well as a departure.

In those days the railroad lines were everywhere incomplete. Helen, alighting from the low train at its furthermost point of advance, found herself with 500 miles of stage-riding before her. With her usual silence, she did not even comment on the discomforts of the journey. She was the only woman in the great swinging coach. The other passengers were men, bronzed and bearded, in flannels and sombreros, and with more or less of the furniture of an armory about them. They paid her a good deal of deferential attention, and were assiduous in supplying every want, real or imagined. And Helen took it all, as she did everything else, with a gentle kind of half-unobservant gravity, that seemed to be very puzzling to their minds.

On the second day, well among the mountains, swinging down a long incline among the dark shadows of the pines, there was a sudden, abrupt report of firearms, a plunging, lurching motion of the coach, a sudden uproar of voices without; and Helen, crushed down into the lower corner of the vehicle, with a smothered impression of several tons of kicking humanity over and above her, heard "road agents" uttered somewhere in the mass, and knew what had befallen them.

One by one the passengers were extracted.

"There's a lady in there," a voice said.

"We'll come to her presently. Seat yourselves on that log, gentlemen. Here she is! Now, madam," offering a diamond-ringed white hand.

Up rose Helen, as little dishevelled as it was possible for a woman to be under the circumstances, and was assisted up and out by a masked man with the easiest elegance of demeanor.

"We are sorry to inconvenience a lady," a quiet voice said, "but it is one of the unpleasant necessities of business. I suspect we have made a mistake. We took this to be the paymaster's trip down to the mines."

Helen bowed composedly, and took her seat beside the others, and then, under cover of half-a-dozen revolvers, there was a rapid and exhaustive collection of valuables from the party. Helen was not molested; no one spoke to her. In the first minute of the attack some one had thrust a heavy wallet into her hand; she held it carelessly, with her handkerchief and the gloves she had taken off, and a book, to which she had clung unconsciously through all the confusion. None of her belongings were touched or looked at.

"The Pine Valley coach will be along before morning. We can only say we are sorry for the blunder," and with a courteous gesture of farewell to Helen, the party rode away.

Both leaders lay dead in their tracks. Clearly there was nothing to do but to wait for the Pine Valley coach. Helen was made comfortable with shawls and wraps on a bed of pine boughs, and fell asleep quietly under the stars. She did not wake even when the coach came up.

"Now, Helen," a voice said, and she opened her eyes to find Harry standing beside her, and with him a tall figure, dark in the starlight.

"Another road agent?" she said, half asleep.

Harry laughed. "We don't know what he may develop into. At present he is Frank Bronson."

Helen rose to her feet, broad awake at once.

"You've had a stirring introduction to your new life," a pleasant voice said, "and popular report makes you out a heroine."

Helen flushed a little resentfully. He might have been talking to a girl of sixteen in that voice of easy patronage. She was silent. Harry, used to that peculiarity, did not notice.

Frank Bronson began again: "I'm afraid you'll be inconveniently crowded, Miss Tryon."

"I beg your pardon," in her slow, cold way, "I am Mrs. Morse."

They came out just then into the glare of the lamps. Bronson looked at her curiously.

"Harry did not tell me," he said, with a sudden air of constrained bashfulness.

At the journey's end the passenger whose pocketbook she had saved took a great solitaire diamond off his little finger. "A memento, madam, simply a memento. The ring was in the wallet. You saved me $15,000 last night by your presence of mind."

She would not take it, but a few weeks later there came to her through the post-office the stone reset in another ring heavy enough for an armlet. She smiled, slipping it over her slender finger. Then she met Bronson's eyes watching her.

"My good deeds pursue me. I am 'the heroine of Pine Gulch.' Would you have suspected it? And there is no address." She dropped the ring into his hand and walked away.

They were settled now in their new home. A very sketchy sort of home it was, but enough for the needs of a climate where a house is not needed much more or much oftener than an umbrella. They had camped with the luxuries of wall-tents, while the young men did their own building. A sitting-room, two sleeping-rooms and a kitchen—that was all: and the canvas of the tents made an awning, under which a hammock might be swung. The new pine boards were aromatic in the hot sunshine; the conventional requirements of living were reduced to their very simplest form.

It was a solitary enough life for a woman. One of Harry's experimental gang of Chinese workers had been detailed to kitchen duties, and the peace of the house was profound. But Helen liked it. Dreamy

and silent she was still, but somehow, little by little, she seemed to come back toward human sympathies and interests. Half-unconsciously her black garments were laid aside as oppressive in the heat of the long, bright days. The young men coming home at night found a white-draped presence awaiting them. Harry thought without spoken comment that something of her girlhood as he remembered it was coming back into her face and into the rounding outlines of her figure. Once or twice he heard an echo of the old imperious inflections of speech, when something went wrong in the simple programme of their housekeeping; once or twice she laughed aloud at some of Sam Lee's achievements. At least, the old monotonous calm was broken; she had fits of depression, felt keenly in the sensitive household atmosphere.

It was the evening after the coming of the ring. Helen found herself at the very bottom of her register of feeling. They were all out-of-doors in the large-starred, dewless Southwestern night. The two men outstretched on their blankets lay silently smoking. Helen, swinging in her hammock, was speechless, too. By-and-by Harry asked her some trivial question, and the voice that answered him was hoarse with tears. He took no notice, and a minute after she went into the house. Harry followed her, and came back after awhile, his own voice not over steady.

"That girl has broken down at last. It's the first time in years, and not easy years either. I doubt if any one has seen her cry since she came home."

"Mrs. Morse?"

"Who else?" testily. "How I hate the name—I never even think of it if I can help it. You don't know the story?"

"I have guessed—that is, I mean I couldn't help knowing there was something painful. Mrs. Morse is young to be a widow."

"She is twenty-five," brusquely. "Helen always would have her own way. She had it when she was seventeen, and married a scoundrel. He got a life-sentence for train-robbery, and was killed trying to

make his escape from prison. She got the news the day her only child was buried."

Bronson gave a half-groan, a sound almost like a sob, as Tryon paused in his blunt recital.

"That was two years ago. She never whimpered under it, and to-night she is crying as if she would kill herself. And I don't know but she will. Think of a woman's life going to wreck like that."

Whatever Bronson may have thought, he said nothing. There was a long silence and much tobacco-smoke.

"Don't they take something?" he said, hesitatingly, after awhile. "A cup of tea or something. I'll broil a quail, if you like."

"That's so," accepting the suggestion cheerfully. Then they went out into Sam Lee's shining little kitchen, and pottered about with the best of intentions, but with much disturbance of small, jingling movables. Helen's crying was over now. She lay prone and nerveless with the exhaustion of such tears. She heard the uproar among the pots and pans, and wondered faintly about it.

Harry opened the door finally, with a laden tray in his hands.

"I made the tea," he explained breathlessly, "and Bronson cooked the bird, and we couldn't find the bread."

Helen sat up and pushed the damp hair back from her face.

"Bronson thought of it," he said persuasively. "I'd try and eat a little." And Helen drank her tea, and nibbled her bird, with an unsmiling sense of the unfitness of things when meat and drink were offered as a remedy for such troubles as hers.

But it did her good. She slept dreamlessly that night, and if she came out to breakfast with heavy shadows under her eyes, the sad-lipped mouth had lost a little of its rigid line of pain.

There had been an epidemic of lawlessness through the country for the last few weeks. The particular manifestation of the disease was horse-stealing. Now,

to take a man's horse was generally worse—for the community—than taking his life. The public sense of justice did not always wait for the slow and rather uncertain action of the law. Harry rode away that evening without defining his business, and Bronson found Helen alone, in her hammock as usual.

These two did not find talk necessary. They had reached that grade of acquaintanceship where long silences are unremarked. A soundless half-hour passed. Helen lay with half-shut eyes, watching the broad flood of sunset light die out of the sky. Bronson was smoking. When the cigar was quite done, he rose deliberately and stood beside her. In the faint light, in her white gown, her twenty-five years rolled back and left her in girlhood again.

"Helen!" he said, touching a fold of her dress with softly reverent hand.

She looked up at him with an instant's surprise, then her eyes fell.

"Forgive me," he said humbly. "I have not seen many women. When you came, it was like a revelation. And now I know that I love you."

She opened her lips to speak, but he stopped her.

"I know," he said. "Harry told me your story. Would you dare trust another man?"

There was something very childlike in the simplicity of the question. She half-smiled. Then all at once the past rushed over her.

"No," she said wildly, rising to her feet. "All that has gone by forever. You do not know what you are saying. A woman who has lived through such a degradation of ill-treatment and cruelty as I—who has so utterly mistaken herself and all the meaning of her life—has no right to listen to such words as you have spoken."

They were standing face to face. She put out her hands with a helpless, strengthless air of repelling protest. Perhaps he misunderstood the gesture; he took them in his own, and held them firmly and gently. She did not resist the clasp, standing mute and miserable. Perhaps until that hour it had never occurred to her that any renewal of that old story could be possible.

She had felt herself set apart from all the common lot of women. That he seemed so innocently and completely to ignore such tragic facts as her life held, beat down all her guard, and swept away the landmarks which had been the dreary reminders of her past folly and sin.

He was what that other had been, a plainsman reared among the influences of an almost lawless community. Always on the edge of the advancing wave of civilization, where the other had grown reckless, he was grave and self-contained. He knew books better than many who had lived among them; there was a gentleness in his speech which meant something better than mere sweet temper; and Helen was woman enough yet to feel the fascination of his muscular strength,—the very clasp that held her, gentle as it was, was irresistible if he chose to have it so.

"At least, I love you," he said at last. "You know it now," with a long breath as of relief. "I have not my secret to keep; and shall never love any one else."

She smiled again through all her trouble. He believed in himself with such manifest faith.

He released her hands. She went back to her hammock and he to his blanket, and silence fell again between them.

Harry came back while they were still in their places.

"We're getting it down fine," he said abruptly to Bronson. "I've been over to Morgan's. We know how many there are in the gang, and we have descriptions of the principal leaders. It's a regularly organized thing. The leader is a Captain Gordon. He'll find himself captained with a short rope if the league gets hold of him. We know pretty well their headquarters."

Helen turned languidly.

"What makes you involve yourself in such a thing?" she said. "It's so much easier to keep out than to get out."

"Suppose you should lose Rebecca some night?"

"I shouldn't like it. But, oh, Harry, you don't want blood on your hands."

"And I don't want to lose my horses," he said doggedly. "If it comes to that, it's their own fault. They know the risks they take."

Helen said no more. Bronson had not spoken at all. He asked an unimportant question or two, and then the subject dropped.

That night every horse worth taking was stolen from the Tryon and Bronson ranch, and with the rest Helen's Rebecca. But the third day afterward Rebecca was found in the morning tied before the door, with as handsome a bridle and lady's saddle as the country afforded, and with a card appended: "Captain Gordon's compliments to Helen Tryon."

"He ought to have said to the heroine of Pine Gulch," Harry said, with deep disgust.

"Perhaps Mrs. Morse is in it, too," Bronson suggested slyly. "You're quite sure that Captain Gordon isn't a friend of yours? Appearances are against you. First the diamond——" and he stopped short as the tears rose in Helen's eyes.

"I didn't mean anything," he explained humbly to Harry afterward.

"Who ever supposed you did? Do you imagine you are ever going to understand what a woman finds to cry about?" he said, wrathfully. "They don't know themselves half the time."

But, after all, it was not Helen at whom he was storming. An extra meeting of the Horse Thief League was summoned. No results followed, and a month wore away peaceably.

Time did not stand still for Helen and Helen's lover. He did not again refer in words to that declaration of his, but not an hour spent in her society did not plead his cause. He took it for granted that his love for her was a thing complete of itself, without hope of return. Perhaps that attitude was his strongest plea. Something in his patience seemed wonderful to her. She could as soon have built the pyramids. She was one of those positive people to whom no half-way measure is possible. That a man should make such an avowal as that, and then should let the days go on in

such commonplace, cheerful, unmarked fashion, roused a new, wondering interest in her mind.

Little by little, unconscious of the gradations of feeling, her whole mental attitude changed. She owned now with a shudder that, if Payne Morse were to cross her path for the first time, she would probably be repelled rather than attracted. She had fallen in love with an ideal, and the living, breathing facts did not bear out the fancy. And the next shock was to realize that she had not yet done with ideals, and to-day's hero was in no wise like yesterday's.

Clearly Helen Morse's days of passive suffering were over. She was silent still, but her silence was dreamy, instead of coldly hopeless. And unwonted bursts of petulance stirred the even tenor of the days.

"What has happened to Helen?" Harry asked wonderingly one day. "Well, anything is better than seeing her go about like a galvanized corpse, as we did for three years."

But Harry was too much absorbed in devising schemes whereby Captain Gordon's band might come to grief, to heed such small bits of melodrama as falling in love, hopelessly or otherwise.

One night it came to pass that, after one of the brief, tremendous storms of wind and rain peculiar to the latitude, Helen answered her brother's hail from the outer darkness, and opened the door to find him and one of the herders holding between them a motionless dead weight, and recognized the white face as Frank Bronson's.

"Is he dead?" she asked quietly.

"I don't know; only stunned, I fancy. Set Sam Lee to heating water and rummaging our flannels. A tree fell as we were coming through the timber and knocked him out of his saddle. What a mercy you are not of the screaming, fainting kind!"

Harry was giving explanations and orders in a sort of running accompaniment that barely veiled his own anxiety. Helen, pale, silent, and helpful, obeyed implicitly. When Bronson opened his eyes at last, her face was the first he saw as his swimming vision steadied

itself. He put out his hand, and she laid hers within it. There was a good deal in the act,—she was not a woman prodigal of such expressions. The heavy blue eyes opened with eager inquiry.

"You must be very quiet," she said with a smile. She did not withdraw her hand, and with a long sigh of relief he turned toward her and fell asleep.

He was out and about his business next day, though in rather a shaky fashion. All day Helen went about with a half-guilty, half-happy strain of feeling on her heart. As the time came for his return, she went and stood before her glass, for the first time, perhaps, in years with a critical and anxious look at the reflection therein. She was too pale; sorrow and loss had left her face scarred with their traces,—what had she to do with love? The fit of self-distrust left a tremor in her manner that even Harry noticed.

"I believe you are living back again," he said. "At this rate, Helen, you'll be a schoolgirl again before you know it."

Her lips quivered in a painful half-smile. He plunged on:

"Did you ever see any one change so, Frank? No, you are not living back; you are going to begin over again, my girl," and he stooped and kissed her.

They were not a demonstrative family, the Tryons. She flushed with a pleased surprise. And dinner being over, he and Bronson rode away in pursuance of some of their horse-thief plans.

They had not been gone many minutes when there came the sharp clatter of a horse's hoofs up to the door, and Bronson flung himself out of the saddle.

"Is it true?" he asked eagerly.

"It is quite true," slowly and almost solemnly.

"Oh, my darling," he had her in his arms; she felt his tears on her face, his kisses on her lips—"what have I done to deserve such happiness?"

She clung to him then with a little cry. "O, Frank, everything failed me once. If that comes again, I shall die."

He held her close against his breast.

"It shall never come again," he said softly.

And then in a minute more he was gone.

All of this out-of-doors, where any one might have seen and heard every word. But who was there to see in that wide, green, empty world? The silence was absolute. She stood listening to the clank of his horse a little before she went back into the house, thinking with a happy smile how the world had changed.

She sat sewing the next day, swinging lazily in her low rocker. Sam Lee was pattering softly about on the bare boards of his kitchen-floor. The south wind sweeping through the wide-open door tossed her hair about her forehead. Outside, the green and sunny silence seemed rhythmical in its boundlessness.

A shadow fell across the doorway. Helen, looking up, saw a tall man standing there, clad in all respects as the other men of the region were. The wide hat, the blue flannel shirt with its white ornamental stitchings, the jangling spurs, and the high riding-boots were all common enough. But Helen's heart beat a little faster as he addressed her after the stereotyped fashion:

"Are the bosses here?"

"Both are on the range. They will not be at home before night."

She had risen to answer him, and stood with her hands on the back of her chair—a little paler than usual, and a growing look of terror in her widening eyes. He had not removed his hat, and his face was heavily bearded. They stood silent for a little space, and then he bared his head with a sudden gesture.

"Helen, don't you know me?"

She neither cried out nor fainted; she stared at him with a fixed horror in her face.

"Yes," she said in a dull sort of way, "you were Payne Morse."

"Were? Do you take me for a ghost? No. I'm all alive. You don't ask me to come in—no matter," crossing the threshold—"no matter, I've something to say, and now's the best time to say it."

He crossed the room and closed the door that led into

Sam Lee's domain; she stood watching him with bloodless face and staring eyes.

"Don't look so frightened, child." There was something of the old musical ring in his voice that had once been so sweet in her ears. With the memory she shuddered through all her frame.

"Do you hate me as much as that?" facing her and looking down on her with half-amused eyes. "Well, I was a brute, but we had been such fools."

He paused, as if waiting for her to speak.

"Let me look at you—you haven't grown younger. And you really thought me dead? Well, I had a narrow chance for it. Look." He turned his face and showed the track of a bullet across the temple and side of his face. "The officers knew better, but they let it go at that—they didn't care to report a successful escape."

Still she stood mute.

"Can't you speak? A man might think you were not glad to see him."

"It is such a surprise," she half whispered, with rigid lips.

"No doubt. Is that fellow going to marry you? I happened to be in the neighborhood last night and got the benefit of that scene—nice thing for a man to be looking at—his own wife, too. I'd a great mind to send a bullet through his head."

"He did not know. He was as innocent as I was."

"Oh, no doubt—quite! No, Helen, that's not fair. I always did do you justice in my heart, in spite of your infernal temper. But what I came here for today was to ask what he meant."

"He did mean that I should be his wife."

"Well," doubtfully, "the law frees you. If he's going to marry you, I suppose it's all right."

"O, Payne, can't you see?—it's all over. How can I marry with you living? I was happy for the first time in all these years," piteously. "I have been so hopeless, so despairing, and it seemed as if I might live on forever."

"Where's the baby?"

"Dead," with a little moan.

A faint quiver crossed his face. "It's a good thing, may be. And so you won't marry because I happen to be alive? And you don't love me either. Women are queer things."

"What are you going to do?" wildly. "Must I go with you?"

"Go with me? No, thank you. I shall get away from here shortly. I had business here, and I give you my word that I did not know you were here when I came. But we shall finish up shortly now, and then I'll be off. And look here, you sha'n't be fooled again. I'll make certain that you are told when I do go."

She had been standing all the while. He came close to her now.

"Can't you give me a kiss?" stooping his still handsome face toward her.

"O, no,—no." She shrank back shivering.

"And I your husband, too! You took it much more coolly the other night," with a careless laugh. "Well, good-by. I sha'n't see you again most likely. He's a handsome fellow,—not much better than I was before I got this beauty-mark, though,—and just as likely to be no better sort."

She sank down on the floor as he went out. By-and-by she pulled down the pillow from the couch near by, and lay there sobbing and shivering. Sam Lee, coming in for directions for the evening meal, found her with closed eyes, and, fancying her asleep, spread a shawl over her and left her, following the devices of his own heart over the cook-stove.

She heard the men coming at last, Bronson and her brother, and met them at the door, so white, so desperate-looking, that both drew rein and sat staring at her speechlessly.

Bronson sprang to the ground at last and took her in his arms. She put him away with a trembling hand, not looking at him.

"Harry, Payne Morse is alive."

"How do you know?"

"I've seen him,—he has been here."

"To-day?"

"Only a little while ago,—it was no mistake; I talked with him. What shall I do? What shall I do?"

Bronson was leaning back against his horse, a bewildered look of agony on his face. But as she turned toward him, he answered her appeal. He came forward and put his arm about her.

"You see, I love your sister," he said to Harry. "She would have been my wife,—she shall be now if she will. But whatever she decides, I love her, and always shall." He spoke very slowly and distinctly. "You hear me, Helen; whatever comes, I will not fail you to the end."

For one minute she laid her head against his shoulder; then with a sob she turned away and entered the house.

After all, human everyday life is not a favorable background for tragedy. The awful happenings drop beneath the current and the ripples run over them, and half the time we forget them unless it happens to be our own hearts that are aching. Before forty-eight hours had passed, the little household was going on in its old way apparently.

It was on the evening of that second day that Harry came back from his weekly visit to the post-office at the station.

"I've got it sure," he said to Bronson; "the Denver police have sent me a photograph of Captain Gordon. Good-looking rascal," handing over the card; "we can't miss with that."

Bronson scrutinized the likeness carefully.

"It's a marked face. That scar across the forehead is peculiar, and not easily hidden."

"Want to see it, Helen? If in your walks abroad you meet Captain Gordon, you'll know him."

She glanced at it, and turned a livid face toward him.

"Harry, it's Payne—Payne Morse."

"What the devil am I to do? Poor Helen, she's made trouble for somebody her whole life through. I'm head and front of it all, and I can't go ahead with the thing now, for her sake,—and you're no better off.

I'll go down to-night, put the thing into Mason's hands, and clear the country till it's over with. We'll have to start for Denver to-morrow without an hour's delay, and Helen will have to stay here alone. I'll get Mason's wife to come over, if she will have her. It's the best way I see out of a bad bargain."

That was Harry Tryon's way, settling everything off-hand, but the plan was carried out, and Helen found herself solitary. Mason's wife came over, but was quickly recalled by the needs of a sick baby. Happily Helen had steady nerves and a controllable imagination. Of real danger there was very little, and she was glad to be alone.

Of what was going on about her she knew nothing. She had never taken much interest in the happenings of the country, and gave no thought to the subject that had been Harry's great interest for so long. Sam Lee's work being done, he had sauntered off to the cabins down in the timber. Helen was swinging in her hammock as usual, dreaming dreams and seeing visions in such dreary fashion as her past gave reason for. Still, with all the sadness, there was a dreamy quiet which was not wholly pain, and with the silence and the starlight, and the slow, monotonous rocking of her swinging cradle, she fell asleep.

"Helen!"

"Yes," she said drowsily, and fell asleep again.

"Helen!" the word was spoken a little louder; a hand touched her; she sprang up broad awake now. Payne Morse stood before her.

He was bareheaded, without his coat, a blood-stained sling held his right arm, a torn handkerchief was knotted round his head; he was haggard and ghastly. She knew it all at once—it was two hours since she had heard shots in the timber, and had lain idly speculating about echoes and the distance the sound had come.

"They are after me. Can you help me?" he said in a hoarse gasp.

"What can I do?"— but it was not a question of helplessness; she was thinking hard.

"They will come here," he said.

"Yes, I suppose so. Yes, I will do my best," slowly.

"I've been hung and shot," with a most unmirthful laugh. "The rope broke, and the fool that fired didn't break anything. I ought to get off after that."

She answered him not a word, but, after a moment's thought: "You can come in here," opening the door of her room. One end had been partitioned off as a closet and store-room. She dragged down a mattress and blankets.

"I will do my best," she said again slowly. She did not look at him; she spoke as if her lips were stiffened.

"You're a plucky little soul," lightly. The man's dare-devil recklessness was uppermost again. "You know who you are entertaining?—not an angel unawares; I'm Captain Gordon."

"Yes, I know."

"All right, then. Mind one thing; they are not likely to use you—a woman—roughly. If it comes to that, I shall appear on the scene."

"I'm not afraid. Don't talk any more, please," in a tired sort of way.

Then she lighted her room, and began dressing leisurely. The occupation had its object; sitting still was impossible while she waited.

But when a sharp rap sounded peremptorily through the house, she started with every nerve. Her voice was steady enough, however, as she went to the curtained window.

"Who is it?"

"Morgan, from over Point."

"Captain Morgan. Yes, I know. If you will find your way in, I will join you presently."

She heard the tramp of feet making their way uncertainly into the unlighted room. She did not hasten, every soft fold of lace about her throat was settled carefully to its place, and she went back to adjust a slipping braid of hair as if the most critical and fastidious of morning callers awaited her. Something of the dramatic instinct must have been born in her. She stood in the doorway presently, holding the lamp far above her head that she might see her visitors, a graceful,

white-clad shape, with shining eyes and flushed cheeks. The men rose involuntarily.

"I am Mrs. Morse," she said quietly. "My brother, Mr. Tryon, is not at home."

"Don't be alarmed," Captain Morgan said reassuringly. "We are the Vigilance Committee, searching for the captain of the horsethief gang. He escaped us a few hours ago and came this way."

She thought of the shooting and hanging, while this soft-voiced vigilant was making his explanation. She moved forward and put her lamp down on a table before she answered.

"He visited us some time since," with a half-smile. "You know we lost all our horses."

"I knew you were here alone, and thought he might take advantage of the fact. Nobody knows how much information he has."

She shook her head.

"Captain Gordon hasn't frightened me," she said calmly. Then she glanced at the men. They were all splashed and travel-torn.

"Could I offer you any refreshment," she said half-timidly, "for yourself or your horses? I have heard my brother speak of you frequently," with the smile that years ago Payne Morse had found so bewitching.

She looked so frail and slight, so entirely different from the Southwestern feminine development, that Morgan, a great, good-natured giant, found himself abashed. As for his companions, they stood with their guns in the hollow of their arms, holding their hats awkwardly and uneasily. They were rough riders and straight shots, but this slender woman upset their nerves.

"We're about played out," Morgan said, "the horses at least. He won't be likely to get far to-night," with a significant glance at the man nearest him, "and we couldn't do much anyhow. It is going to be blacker than pitch. If you don't mind our camping on the place—you don't look much like work, Mrs. Morse, but I'm not a bad hand at a frying-pan myself."

"Certainly, gentlemen," with sweetest courtesy.

"You know the way to the corncribs, and"—putting out a pair of slender browned hands—"I'm not as helpless as I look."

So she and Captain Morgan made coffee, fried bacon, and baked biscuit, while the men fed their horses and arranged sleeping-places for themselves.

"Don't that beat anything you ever saw in your life in the way of a woman?" one of them said, after a long reconnoissance through the kitchen window. "And there's Morgan," with awe in his voice, "talking away to her as chipper as a jay-bird."

They rode away in the gray of the morning. All day long she ministered to the man who had wrecked her life. There was little talk—they could not venture on that. He slept like a worn-out man, who makes the most of his chances in safety. When night came again and again Sam Lee left the house alone, then, clad in Harry Tryon's garments and riding Rebecca, Payne Morse made his way to a signal station on the railway, ten miles away.

"Good-by," he said. "You'll not be likely to see or hear of me again. For your sake it's almost a pity that they didn't make an end of me."

"Don't say that, Payne. We'll live out our lives. Yours might have such chances if you chose to use them."

"Good-by, my girl." He stooped and kissed her cheek. "If I could go back again—well, we wouldn't get married."

Harry Tryon came back three or four days later. He knew about the dispersing of the gang, and the hanging of two or three of its members.

"And Payne?" Helen asked.

"They told me he escaped," not meeting her eyes.

Then she told him.

"By Jove, Helen! They never suspected, that's certain. After that I wonder if there's anything you can't stand. Listen, Payne Morse is dead."

He had risen, and was holding both her hands as she sat before him.

"I know it's true," he said earnestly. "I saw him.

He was taken out of the train at the junction where I waited. Died of heart-disease, they said, without a struggle or a word."

He spoke slowly, as if to give her time to take in the significance of his words. Her face whitened slowly, and as he finished, she dropped at his feet in a faint like death.

She was married in the dim twilight in the old church at home, with just her mother and sisters near her, and her father watching her with softened eyes. The organ murmured in full, soft chords, but there were no strangers, no bridal display. As she stepped out into the sweet spring evening, the young faint crescent of the moon met her eyes.

"It's the beginning," Frank whispered softly, bending down that she alone might hear.

Murderers, no matter how much they gain by their sins, seem to have, on the whole, a miserable time. If it is not one thing which haunts them, it is another. In the following impressive tale by Jules Lermina (translated for ROMANCE by Sophie Earl), it is an apple-tree which destroys all the pleasure of the ill-gotten gold.

THE GHOST OF AN APPLE-TREE.

JACQUES had just committed an awful deed—a fearful crime—in short, a murder; yet, so far, he felt no remorse. It happened in this way:

He was not naturally cruel nor wicked, only quick-tempered and impulsive. A law-student, diligent and thorough, a philosopher imbued with Schopenhauer, he led a dreary life, lacked money, gave lessons, and scarcely kept soul and body together. The burden began to weigh heavily on him, and at times he felt an angry revolt against his circumstances, a dissatisfaction that might—and did, as we shall see—lead him to the lowest depths of infamy.

One summer evening, hungry and penniless, raging at the thought of a pleasure-party planned for the morrow, which he must give up for want of a little money, he walked beyond the city gates, and at about eight o'clock he found himself on a long and lonely road which stretched straight on till it was lost in the dusky gloom.

Then, like an evil omen, there came a heavy crash of thunder and great drops of rain began to fall. Jacques did not fear the storm except as concerned his clothing and his health; he did not wish to spoil his garments, nor catch an expensive attack of pneumonia. No shelter. To the right, as to the left, a barren plain. At last, by good fortune, he spied a tree, standing all alone, a crooked, twisted apple-tree. The tired man crouched under its branches. The fury of the storm redoubled. Everything, even Nature, seemed against poor Jacques. Chilly, soaked, exasperated, he shook his fist in the air as the rain fell down like threads of steel.

"Such weather! such weather!" After a little, a second person came grumbling up to lean against the tree, with his back to Jacques, whom he had not perceived. The new-comer seemed to be a little tipsy; for he rambled on aloud in a husky voice:

"This is fine! Those fellows played me a pretty trick in driving off with my carriage, and leaving me to walk home alone with all this money in my pocket!"

Jacques, hearing these fatal words, and yielding to the temptation of his evil passion, fell upon the stranger, strangled him, and emptied his purse. This accomplished, he turned toward home.

The apple-tree, which had not budged during this incident, began to follow him.

It is not a customary occurrence for an apple-tree to follow a man, and therefore Jacques cannot be accused of weakness if we admit that he felt a little surprise. Hearing the roots sliding behind him, he turned and beheld the tree, a dark shadow on the darkness.

"I am nervous," he thought. "It is a fancy!"

He continued to walk, and the tree continued to follow him.

"Either I have gone mad," said Jacques, "or this manifestation is an inexplicable freak of Nature; but I shall soon know; for when I get into the city, the people will not let an apple-tree go by without making some remark."

But the people passed and made no remarks, and the tree did not appear to mind them.

Jacques meditated.

"Well, then," he concluded, "it is certain that this apple-tree is a visible form of remorse, such as Banquo's ghost was to Macbeth, and the Commander to Don Juan; but this hallucination is the more singular because I feel no remorse at all! The tree seems to disregard received tradition. Never mind! I have got some money. After a night's rest, my tree will have disappeared."

He quickened his step, not to escape from his apple-tree, but because he was weary and longed for repose. Before the door, he wondered if the apple-tree would enter; he even felt a kind of interest about it, on account

of the narrowness of the hall, fearing the branches might be broken. He rang, went in, and the door closed. The tree remained outside. Jacques smiled: not that the tree annoyed him; only he thought the janitor might have objected to such a companion.

In his own room he counted his ill-gotten gain—a considerable sum; then he suddenly thought of the tree and looked out. It was on the sidewalk gliding to and fro; it even moved politely aside to allow two policemen to pass. Jacques went to bed and slept soundly till morning.

Heavy knocks on his door awoke him. "Oh! Ah! Yes,—to be sure!" It was his friends who came to seek him for the pleasure-party. He threw on his garments and opened the door, greeting them gayly; then he finished his dressing while proposing lively plans for the day. He slipped several gold-pieces into his pocket, and they started off together to meet the rest of the company at the place agreed on.

The apple-tree, which waited respectfully for him on the sidewalk, began immediately to follow him like a well-bred lackey. Jacques, who felt no grudge, gave it a little smile of acknowledgment, as though it were an old acquaintance.

When the party of ladies and gentlemen was complete, Jacques insisted on regaling them all with vermouth, and ordered the waiter to give one to his apple-tree, though it seemed to sketch a gesture of refusal with its boughs. The waiter, who did not understand, looked angry.

As they entered the carriages to drive to the railway station, Jacques gave his tree an amiable nudge with his elbow, making some joke about leaving it behind. Impassively the tree waited on the sidewalk till they started, when it followed the conveyance at a quick trot. Leaning over the window, Jacques watched it. Once he gave a little cry of terror as a heavy vehicle crossed its path and he thought it might be run over; but it escaped.

"What in the world is the matter with you?" exclaimed his companions, in surprise.

"Don't trouble about me. It is only my apple-tree——"

"Your apple-tree! Why, what *can* you mean?"

But Jacques did not explain.

At the station, the tree did not get lost. Jacques began to feel himself cruel in trotting the poor thing so far; he was growing attached to it, really. He was soon reassured; for it galloped beside the train, like an outrider attending the carriage of a sovereign.

Only Jacques was so absorbed in watching it that he neglected his friends, and one of them—a lady, who liked him—reproached him gently for his preoccupation.

"You are jealous of my apple-tree?" he asked her, laughingly.

"Apple-tree! Apple-tree!" they began to chant it to the tune of a popular song, improvising words which they thought appropriate. Jacques really feared they might hurt its feelings; but it did not seem to mind.

The chosen spot was reached. The day sped on in mirth. Jacques was wild with merriment, never losing sight of his attendant tree.

Some one proposed a row on the river.

"No! no!" cried Jacques; "perhaps he may not know how to swim!"

"Who?"

"My ap——"

"Apple-tree! Apple-tree! What *is* the joke? Do explain."

Jacques reddened a little. These people could not possibly understand. He looked at his tree as if to consult it, and it seemed to him that the tree had no objection to the water.

The boats set off, and the apple-tree followed. Jacques kept on the alert, ready to hold out a helping hand; he was so fond of his tree!

In the evening at dinner Jacques imbibed recklessly; and he did not forget to fling a glass of champagne over his apple-tree. He grew very tipsy, and quarrelsome.

"I am tired of you all!" he cried to his friends. "You bore me inexpressibly! I shall leave you and go off by myself—with my apple-tree!"

They laughed good-naturedly and tried to keep him. The ladies looked annoyed; but off he went.

It was night now, and very dark. He went along the steep bank, still accompanied by his tree. He felt horribly humiliated and ashamed, for he was staggering and stumbling, while the sober tree slid on erect and firm.

Jacques zigzagged along in a deplorable fashion nearer and nearer to the water's edge. Feeling the necessity of support, he sidled up to the apple-tree.

"You are my friend," he said; "let me lean on you."

He threw his weight against the tree; but his body encountered the empty air, he lost his balance, rolled down the steep declivity into the river, and was drowned.

The tree, left to itself, returned to the field from whence it came.

Le Français published this little sketch anonymously, and H. L. B. Porter has translated it for ROMANCE. Perhaps Angeline Majolin might have arranged matters better if she had not been so gentle. Gentleness, as a rule, however beautiful it may be, is not indispensable to the battle of life.

AN OLD MAID.

EVERYBODY wondered how Mademoiselle Angeline Majolin happened to be an old maid. They all admitted that she was charming. Her head was bound with heavy braids of glossy hair, and her beautiful black eyes were full of a pathetic gentleness. She lodged in the fourth story of a tenement on the Rue Boursault, alone with her blind mother, whom she attended constantly. These ladies received no company; but although they sought to attract no attention, whoever met them could not help feeling interested in them and that some sad mystery surrounded their seclusion.

The family of Majolin was thirty years ago one of the richest and most influential in the province. Unhappily Monsieur Majolin was a gambler. He engaged in all sorts of speculations, in order to recover the money which he had lost in play.

When he saw ruin staring him in the face, he killed himself. Madame Majolin was doubly stricken by the loss of fortune and the violent death of her husband, whom, although he had caused her much suffering, she still loved dearly. And, alas! her misfortunes did not end here. Her eldest son had inherited the unfortunate failing of his father. At last, in order to evade justice, he fled to the colonies, and was never heard from again. The only other remaining son perished from a hunting accident.

The poor lady then had left to her but a single child, her daughter Angeline. They removed to a small farm, which was attached to the grand castle in which they had once lived. There they managed to subsist on the produce of the place and a few rentals, all that remained

of their once ample fortune. Here grief and tears soon caused Mrs. Majolin to lose her sight, which day by day grew duller until she became blind.

Notwithstanding the isolation and sadness in which these two women lived, the beauty of Angeline, in spite of its somewhat serious and melancholy character, could not fail to attract attention. As she approached her twentieth year, two young men began to show a marked admiration for her. One of them in particular was very assiduous.

It was their cousin, Maxime de Grandlieu, a young man of noble presence, a delightful companion, talented, strong and high-spirited. He had just finished his studies, and had come to the country for a season of rest before entering upon the brilliant career which he had marked out for himself, and which his great fortune rendered possible.

The innocent and tender heart of Angeline responded at once to the young man's evident affection. A mysterious but delightful bewilderment would possess her, after a waltz upon Maxime's arm. Enchanted by the music and their own happiness, they loved to linger for a moment's talk by themselves in the embrasure of a window; or they would exchange the flowers that they wore, she taking hers from her corsage, and he, his from his coat.

They had still other joys together. Among these, not the least were their rambles among the fields, bathed in the delicious light of sunset; when they were tired, or desired to study nature more attentively, they sat down at the base of the great trees and rested under their heavy shadows. Since their souls were simple and united, they spoke little.

At other times, when the sick mother gently complained that she was left alone too often, they remained together in the parlor, where the majestic portraits of their ancestors looked down upon them with a sort of grave indulgence. If he delayed to come, she would advance as far as the stairway, holding in her hand a bunch of white roses. When he began to climb the steps, she would playfully pelt him with the white petals.

Smilingly he would advance under this snowy avalanche, happy in the knowledge that he was beloved.

However, a shadow invisible to Angeline menaced her happiness, even while she was in the first bloom of her new felicity.

Maxime, naturally averse to everything that was dolorous and dismal, gradually conceived a strong aversion for Madame Majolin. The sight of her melancholy face spoiled all his joy. He was one of those who are chilled and repulsed by grief and infirmity, as if a deadly contagion lurked within them. The young girl, entirely wrapped up in her love, was slow to perceive the dislike which Maxime evinced toward her blind mother. Even if she had observed it, she would have called it simply the natural neglect resulting from his utter absorption in his love for herself.

At last one evening an explanation took place. They were on the terrace. Maxime de Grandlieu had taken Angeline's hand, and for the first time had kissed it very tenderly and passionately.

"My dear one," he said, "it is time that our lives were bound together, for our hearts are inseparable. Will you accept my name and my fortune? We will travel. Your sad childhood has been full of mourning. You will perhaps forget your sorrow in my love. For the remainder of your life, you shall know no deprivation. We will go all over the world, rejoicing in our affection. Then we can make our home in Paris. Your mother can live here on her property, and we can watch over her, and see that she wants for nothing. Of course she would be out of place in the midst of our elegant life, where her infirmity would be a blot and a shadow. You will be fitted to adorn society, and I shall be a constant worshiper at your shrine."

The pale moon shed its perfidious rays upon the face of the young man as he uttered these words. Far away the trees, grouped together among the shadows, resembled spirit-beings pretending to caress and press close to each other.

Deeply moved, Angeline remained quiet. The hour seemed very solemn to her. Finally she raised her head

and responded in a low voice, "Maxime, I will reflect on what you have said, and will answer you to-morrow. Adieu."

She passed a wretched night. Her mother went to bed and to sleep, breathing with the regular respiration of age, which resembles so much that of a child; but the young girl in her little chamber burst into sobs. Her emotion was stronger than she was, and for a while she allowed it full sway. A veil had been torn from her eyes, a veil which for twenty years had covered from her sight her own heart. She had not realized before the shocking selfishness which filled it. Ah! her beautiful, simple dream! How it disappeared in the awful sternness of real life, never until now wholly revealed to her. In the first place, she was poor. She had felt it keenly this evening from the way in which Maxime had spoken of his own wealth. Until now she had thought little of it, for she had but few wants. The beauty of the earth, its skies, its trees, its flowers, its birds, its free air, sufficed for her.

If she married him, she must, as an obedient wife, follow his own gay, active life. The requirements of marriage with him appeared distinct and hard. It would be necessary for her to leave this poor, infirm mother, the victim of so many misfortunes. She could no longer comfort her with tenderness and daily ministrations. Her mother, who could barely endure her child's absence for an hour, would in solitude become more and more unhappy, and would end her days in the charge of some impatient and mercenary hireling. Certainly there could be found no one to replace the affection and attentions of a daughter.

Angeline wept for hours, and sometimes in the midst of her tears there would appear to her her father, with a revolver in his hand. Ah! did all men resemble each other and were they all executioners of their wives? "Unhappy those who desire the joys of Hymen!" she thought. "The best destiny for women is to live solitary or devoted to another of their own kind, far away from men!"

Day-dawn still found her a prey to these lugubrious

thoughts. Calm came, however, slowly and frightfully.

Angeline had taken a decided resolution. She would never marry. She would remain as she was, having but one object. She would never leave her mother, ill and blind. She would remain a maid, satisfied with the joys of an approving conscience and cheerfully performing the gentle charities which came to her hand. Perhaps some day the wounds of her heart would heal; she would regret nothing, and she could, after saying her prayers, sleep with clasped hands, thanking Heaven for according to her peace of body and mind.

Quickly she wrote some words of refusal which would admit of no reply. Then she occupied herself with gathering together some effects and with persuading her mother to remove to Paris.

No! she wished no more to live in the country, where she had suffered so much and where every object would remind her of the past. Madame Majolin yielded to what she thought a caprice of her daughter, and conformed without much complaint. She never knew the sacrifice of Angeline in her behalf.

This is why the young girl has always shut her heart to things without. Her first and only love is the seal of her solitude.

Her mother, whom she never quitted and whose eyes she closed in death, has long ago passed beyond this life. And now, her last duty accomplished, Angeline Majolin continues to live alone—an old maid.

After concluding this beautiful story by Erckmann-Chatrian (made into English for ROMANCE by Pauline S. Downes), every reader will agree that it leaves matters as they should be,—and yet one hopes that something very pleasant is reserved for the excellent man who so generously accepted an untoward fate.

THE LOVERS OF GRINDERWALD.

WHEN all other passions are extinguished, when one has turned from the illusions of glory and of fortune, then is born in the heart a strange, mysterious passion of infinite joy—the love of fishing.

Ah! my dear friends, you do not know the happiness of following the line along the river, of skilfully guiding it to the border of the whirling foam, or under the shadow of the large willows where the trout and salmon lie in ambush. You cannot imagine the emotion of the fisherman, when he sees the cork drawn under the water, when he feels the fish struggling with the hook, and when with a sudden, vigorous effort, he throws it through the air upon the meadow, wriggling and glistening in the sun. Ah, you cannot conceive of such pleasure!

The most adroit angler whom I have ever known was Monsieur Zacharias Seiler, an old judge of the tribunal of Stautz, in Switzerland, and several times a member of the grand council sitting at Lucerne. After having listened, for twenty-five or thirty years, to the clamors of Master Ludwig, of Master Hemmerdinger, and other advocates in his jurisdiction, the good man had finally withdrawn from public life, and was enjoying his retreat, in the street of Kusnacht, under the surveillance of Mademoiselle Theresa, his devoted old housekeeper, who had a crooked nose, and a chin scantily adorned with a light gray beard.

These two calm beings were mutually indulgent of each other's weaknesses. Mlle. Theresa watched over the possessions of monsieur, ironed his linen, and took care of his tobacco, which was kept in a large stone pot, and

moistened from time to time. Then she was free to think of her birds, to read her prayer-book, to go to mass.

Master Zacharias was nearing his sixtieth year. He wore a wig, and had no recreation save cultivating a few flowers, and reading the *Gazette des Propylées.*

The first time that he had the idea of going to fish, and had provided himself with a pole, a large straw hat, a fishing-sack and other accessories, he carried it out as though it were a veritable affair of state.

For fifteen days Mlle. Theresa knew not where to place these objects; she fretted, she was impatient, and went to confession once or twice a month oftener than usual—then everything returned to the beaten track.

When monsieur wished to go on a fishing-trip, the excellent man, who deplored his own weakness, would contemplate the sky with a melancholy expression and say: "What a beautiful morning, Theresa! What weather! We shall have no rain for three weeks."

Theresa would allow him to languish a moment; then laying aside her knitting, or her prayer-book, she would look up the fishing-sack, the loose coat and the large hat. Then the face of Master Zacharias would beam with animation; he would arise and say, "You have an excellent idea, Theresa. I will go a-fishing."

"Yes, monsieur, but you will return by seven o'clock? The evenings are chilly."

"Bah! I have not coughed for two months. You have placed a piece of bread in the sack, and a small bottle, Theresa?"

"Do not be uneasy, monsieur. Do I ever forget anything?"

She would aid him in putting on his costume, and he would impatiently say, "Thanks, thanks. I am ready."

At last, taking his fishing-pole, he would set forth. Theresa, at the window, would look after him till he disappeared from sight; then she would gravely seat herself and resume her work. He, on his way, would think: "Theresa would like much better to see me seated at my desk, reading my journal. But the idea of remaining at home in such weather! Ah! Zacharias, your

limbs are no longer heavy. Oh, the verdure!—the fresh air!"

He would lengthen his steps in the narrow pathway which crossed the high grass of the slope. He would seem already to see the river—the tall trees sifting the light and shadow around him. He would seem to breathe the perfume of the mosses, of the ivy, and the odorous resin of the pines. He would hear the distant murmur of the streams and the gushing of the springs as they burst from the rocks. An hour later his dream would be a reality—and, a rare thing, a reality more complete than the dream itself!

Oh! how charming nature is in the great forest, always surpassing the imagination of man,—always new, always unexpected! To-day and yesterday are never alike. The sublime artist never reposes.

One day in the month of July, the fishing-sack of Zacharias found itself so full of little salmon-trout, toward three o'clock in the afternoon, that the good man wished to take no more, for, as Pfadfinder says, it was necessary to leave some for the morrow. After having washed them and carefully enveloped them in the sorrel and grass of the meadow, to preserve their freshness, after having coiled his line and bathed his hands, he felt a desire to have a good nap in the heather. The heat was excessive; he wished to wait till the shadows were lengthening before climbing the hill of Bigelberg.

Having eaten his bread and moistened his lips with a swallow of Rikevir, he climbed twenty or thirty steps above the pathway, and with heavy eyelids extended himself in the shadow of the pines upon the moss.

Never had the judge such a sleep; the overpowering rays of the sun darting its long arrows of gold in the shadow of the woods, the deep murmur of the insects upon the slope, in the meadows, upon the water; the cooing of the ring-doves sitting under the sombre dome of the beeches and oaks, made such a grand harmony that the soul of Zacharias entered into the universal concert.

Presently he yawned, opened his eyes, and saw a troop

of jays traverse the foliage. Then he thought he saw the cork of his line tossing and descending—a salmon was taken—he drew it in—the pole bent in a half-circle.

The good man was sleeping profoundly. He was dreaming—and the immense orchestra pursued around him its eternal music. Time passed. Millions of animated beings had lived their long life of an hour, when the judge was awakened by the whistling of a bird that was unknown to him.

He sat up in order to see, and—imagine his surprise! The bird was a young girl of seventeen or eighteen, fresh, with rosy cheeks, vermilion lips, and brown hair floating in long tresses. She wore a short red skirt and well-fitting jacket,—evidently a young peasant girl, who was descending the sandy pathway of Bigelberg, a basket balanced upon her head, and her arm, a little sunburnt, but round and plump, gracefully curved to the hip. Oh! the pretty bird! How well it whistled, and its little chin, round as a peach, was pleasant to see!

Master Zacharias was quite moved; a wave of warm blood, such as at twenty years makes the heart beat, ran through his veins; he reddened, and, rising, said:

"Good day, my lovely child."

The young girl halted, opened her large eyes and recognized him. Who in all the country did not know the good old judge? "Ah!" said she, with a smile, "it is Monsieur Zacharias Seiler!"

The old man descended to the path and wished to speak; but he only stammered a few unintelligible words, so that the young girl appeared quite embarrassed. At last he said to her: "Where are you going through the woods at this hour, dear child?"

She extended her arm and showed him in the distance, at the end of the valley, a forester's house.

"I am returning to my father's house," said she, "the forester, Yeri Foerster, whom you know without doubt, monsieur judge."

"What! you are the daughter of the brave Yeri? Ah! I know him well. A very worthy man. Then you are the little Charlotte, of whom he has often spoken, when he brought me his official reports?"

"Yes, monsieur judge. I have been to the city and am returning home."

"You have a very nice bunch of strawberries," said the old man.

She detached it from her belt and presented it to him.

"If it please you, Monsieur Seiler?"

Zacharias was charmed.

"Ah, yes," said he, "I accept, and will accompany you. I wish to see that brave Foerster. He ought to be a little older than when I last saw him."

"He is very near your age, monsieur judge," said Charlotte, naïvely,—"from fifty-five to sixty years."

This simple response brought the good man to his senses, and while walking, he became pensive.

Of what thought he? No one knows—but how many, many times it has happened that a good and worthy man, who imagines himself to have fulfilled all his duties, has finished by discovering that he has neglected the greatest, the most holy, the most beautiful of all—that of loving! And what he suffers, to think of it a little too late!

Soon Master Zacharias and Charlotte had made the détour of the valley, where the pathway led over a little wooden bridge to the house of the forester.

They perceived, at a distance, Yeri Foerster with his large old hat, his calm eyes, his brown cheeks and gray temples, seated upon a bench near his door; two beautiful red hunting-dogs were extended at his feet; and the vines behind him mounted to the top of the gable.

The old guard, with eyes as piercing as those of an eagle, recognized at a distance Master Zacharias and his daughter; he came to meet them, raising his hat.

"I salute you, monsieur judge," said he, with the frank and cordial air of a mountaineer. "What happy circumstance procures me the honor of such a visit?"

"Master Yeri," responded the good man, "I find myself a little too late in the mountains. Do you not have a little corner vacant at your table, and a bed at the disposition of your friends?"

"Ah!" cried the guard, "had we only one bed in the house, would it not be at the disposal of the best, the

most honored of our old magistrates of Stautz? Ah, Monsieur Seiler, what an honor you confer upon the humble dwelling of Yeri Foerster!"

Entering the house he cried, "Christina! Christina! Monsieur Judge Zacharias Seiler wishes to repose under our roof."

Then a good old woman, quite small, with a face wrinkled as a vine-leaf, but still fresh and laughing, and with her head surmounted by a head-dress of ribbons, appeared upon the sill, then turned immediately, murmuring: "Oh!—is it possible—monsieur, the judge!"

And she descended very quickly to the kitchen.

"My good people," said Master Zacharias, "truly you make me too welcome. I was not expecting——"

"Monsieur judge, even if you forget the good that you have done, others remember it."

Then little Charlotte, setting her basket upon the table, appeared very proud to have led such a guest to the house. She drew forth the sugar, the coffee, all the small provisions which she had bought in the city for the household. And monsieur, the judge, regarding her pretty profile, felt again his poor old heart beating gently and seeming to say to him, "Love is beautiful, Zacharias! Love is beautiful!"

What shall I say? Master Seiler passed the evening at the house of Yeri Foerster, forgetting the anxiety of Theresa, his promise to return before seven o'clock, his old habits of order and submission.

Picture to yourself the large room, its ceiling crossed with brown beams; the windows open upon the silent valley; a round table in the centre, covered with a neat white cloth, barred with red; the blaze of the lamp, illumining the grave faces of Zacharias and of Yeri Foerster, the sweet countenance of Charlotte, rosy and smiling, and the little head-dress of Christina, with its long fluttering ribbons. Picture, also, the grand supper-table, ornamented with its large, flower-decorated dishes, from whence escaped an appetizing odor, the platter of trout, garnished with parsley, the plates covered with fruit, and honeycomb, yellow as gold—then the worthy Zach-

arias, presenting in turn the fruit and the delicious honey to the girl, who lowered her eyes, embarrassed at the compliments and tender words of the old man.

The brave Yeri straightened himself, quite proud of her praises, and Christina said, "Oh! Monsieur judge, you are too good. You do not know how much trouble the little girl gives us! She is so gay, so stubborn when she wishes anything! You will spoil her with so many beautiful words!"

To which Zacharias responded, "Madame Christina, you possess a treasure! Mademoiselle Charlotte deserves all that I have said of her."

Then Master Yeri, raising his glass, cried: "To the health of our good and venerable Judge Zacharias."

Picture to yourself, also, the clock chanting the hours with a hoarse voice; the hunting-dogs under the table, snapping the bones, and throwing their odd shadows upon the floor; while outside is the great silence of the woods, the gentle murmur of the river.

"How happy one could be living here, and having plenty assured him, with a young and pretty companion, calm, tranquil, obedient, a little giddy perhaps, capricious, but cheerful. Not four steps from the river, where one could throw his line from time to time; in the shadow of the grand forest, where he could follow the chase, with his father-in-law, Yeri Foerster, waking the echoes around him. What happiness! What an existence!"

Thus dreamed Zacharias. At last, eleven o'clock sounded, and feeling the coolness of the night, he arose.

How young he was! How fresh and agile he felt! With what ardor would he have pressed a kiss upon the little hand of Charlotte. But he must not think of that yet! Later!

"Well, Master Yeri," said he, "the hour of slumber has arrived. Good night, and thanks, many thanks for your hospitality."

"At what hour does Monsieur arise?" asked Madame Christina.

"Oh!" said he, regarding Charlotte, "I am an early

riser. As you see, dear madam, I do not yet feel my age; I rise at five o'clock."

"Like myself, Monsieur Seiler," cried the guard. "I rise before daybreak; but there is no use in denying it, I find it hard work. One is no longer young, ha! ha!"

"Bah! I feel nothing of the kind, Master Foerster. I have never been more vigorous, more alert."

Behold him quickly mounting the high steps of the stairway. Truly, Zacharias was but twenty years old; but those twenty years lasted only a quarter-of-an-hour.

Once resting in the large feather-bed, the coverings drawn up to his chin, and his handkerchief knotted around his head, he said to himself:

"Sleep, Zacharias, sleep. You are very tired, you have great need of rest."

And he was going to sleep, when, reopening his eyes and thinking of Charlotte, he said, "No; I am not weary! I am only twenty years old! Yes, my heart is but twenty! Oh! I will not be so foolish as to shut myself in the libraries, and spend my youth upon the Pandects and Commentaries of Altia. I am in love. I am going to be happy!"

Soon the good man was sleeping profoundly. Even till nine o'clock, his nap lasted. The old guard re-entering the house from his matutinal tour of inspection of the wood-chopping, of the nets in the river, and of the snares in the brushwood, uneasy not to see his guest, entered his chamber, wishing him good morning. Then, seeing the high sun, hearing the loud singing of the birds in the foliage, the good man, a little ashamed of his boasting, arose, deprecating his fatigue from fishing, and the hearty supper of the evening.

"Ah! Monsieur Seiler," said the guard-forester, "it is quite natural. I would like, also, to have a good morning nap, if it were not a necessity to be on my feet. What I need, you know, is a young son-in-law, a solid, wide-awake fellow, to take my place. I would willingly cede to him my gun and sack."

Zacharias felt much disturbed at these words. Having dressed, he descended. The good Christina awaited him. Charlotte had departed with the haymakers.

The breakfast was short, and the judge, having thanked these good people, retook the road to Stautz, meditative, recalling the anxiety which Mademoiselle Theresa must have felt, yet not being able to detach himself from his visions, and the thousand charming illusions which enveloped his soul.

It is useless to paint the reception that his worthy housekeeper gave him, her reproaches, her anger, even; "she had not closed her eyes all night; she had believed monsieur drowned in the river; she had sent ten persons to seek him," etc., etc.

Monsieur Seiler listened calmly to her complaints, as formerly to those of an advocate pleading a lost case. In his state of mind the sulkings of Theresa were nothing.

By autumn, he had acquired such a habit of being at the house of the forester that the old guard, attributing his visits to his love for fishing, found himself strongly embarrassed in accepting the presents which the worthy magistrate gave him, in compensation for his daily hospitality. Besides this, Monsieur Seiler wished to share his occupations, to follow him in his inspections; he wished to join in all their excursions in the Grinderwald and Entlebach.

Yeri Foerster shaking his head, at times, said:

"I never knew a better judge, a more learned man in all things, one of greater integrity or more respected than Monsieur Seiler. Formerly, when I delivered my reports to him, he always praised me, and it is to him I owe my grade of brigadier,—but," said he to his wife, "I believe that the mind of this excellent man is getting childish. Do you know, the other day, he wished to help me build the bird-houses. He shows a nervousness, a singular activity—and then, he goes to aid Charlotte in turning the hay, with all the peasants laughing at him. Truly, Christina, that does not suit me,—above all, such a person! I do not dare to say anything to him, he is so far above us! And then, do you know, he wishes to force me to receive a pension,—and such a pension—a hundred florins a month! And that silk dress that he has given Charlotte for her birthday! Do

they wear silk dresses in our valley? Is a silk dress suitable for the daughter of a guard-forester?"

"Ah!" said the woman, "let him do as he wishes. He is pleased with us,—everything is so simple,—with a little milk, a little honey, this good Zacharias is content. In the town, he is alone with his old housekeeper, in his large mansion, while here our little girl cares for him. Who knows? He will finish, perhaps, by adopting her, and if he dies, she will be remembered in his will."

The guard, not knowing what to say, shrugged his shoulders; to his common sense it seemed mysterious; but he had no suspicion of the folly of the good man.

One fine morning, he saw descending the hill from Bigelberg a wagon, laden with three large casks of old wine of Rikevir. Of all gifts that could be bestowed upon him, this was the most agreeable; for Yeri Foerster loved above all things a glass of good wine.

"That warms one," said he laughing. And when he had tasted the wine, he could not help crying:

"That good Zacharias is truly the best, the most honest man in the world. He wishes to fill our cellar! Charlotte, go cut the most beautiful flowers in the garden. Cut all the roses, do you understand?—the most beautiful jasmines! You shall make a bouquet, and when he comes, you shall present it yourself. Charlotte! Charlotte! Hurry! He is coming with his long fishing-pole."

"Yes, father."

The good man appeared upon the hill under the shadow of the pines. From a distance, Yeri Foerster, raising his voice, cried: "To the health of the best man I know. To the health of our benefactor!"

Zacharias smiled. Christina was preparing supper; a young rabbit was roasting on the spit.

The eyes of the old judge beamed with satisfaction; but when he saw Charlotte running through the paths of the garden, and gathering the flowers,—when he saw her appear with her large bouquet, which she humbly presented to him, with eyes lowered, saying, "Monsieur, will you accept this bouquet from your little

Charlotte?"—then a sudden blush reddened his venerable cheeks, and as she bent to take his hand, "Oh! no, my dear child," said he, "no,—but accept from your friend,—from your best friend,—a tender kiss."

And he kissed her rosy cheeks.

The old guard, shouting with laughter, cried:

"Monsieur Seiler, come, seat yourself under the acacia. Come, taste your wine. Ah! my wife was right to call you our benefactor."

Master Zacharias being seated before the pine table, in the open air, his fishing-pole against the wall, Charlotte facing him, and Yeri Foerster at his right, the dinner was served, and the judge began to talk of his projects for the future. He had saved money, and had received from his family a pretty fortune which he had well managed. He wished to buy a few hundred acres of wood around the valley, and to build a house half-way up the hill. "We shall always be together," said he to Yeri, "either at your house or at mine."

Mother Christina chatted in her turn of one thing and another. Charlotte appeared pleased, and Zacharias imagined himself to be understood by these good people.

Thus time passed, and when the night had come, when they had well feasted on the Rikevir, the rabbit of Christina, the *koechlen* sprinkled with cinnamon, Judge Seiler, happy, content, filled with the most pleasant illusions, ascended to his room, deferring till the morrow his grand declaration, not doubting that it would be accepted. He held the bouquet in his hand, and when he was alone, he kissed it, murmuring:

"Zacharias, Zacharias, you will be the happiest of men. You will be the husband of the most lovely girl in the world."

At this thought the good man seated himself, elated with hope; he remained more than an hour, dreaming, with elbows leaning upon the window, hearing the frogs chant in the moonlight down in the silent valley.

At last, toward one o'clock in the morning, he retired, and slept like a soul in bliss.

At this time of the year the mountaineers of Harberg, of Kusnacht, and other near hamlets descended the

mountains before daybreak, to cut the tall grass of the valley. In the distance, one could hear their monotonous chants, accompanied in cadence by the circular movement of their scythes, and the laughing voices of the young girls and young men.

But Master Zacharias heard nothing of this, for he was sleeping with all his soul, when a tap upon the window awoke him suddenly.

He listened and heard outside a "Hush! Hush"—spoken quite low, so low that it seemed like the nestling of a bird. However, the heart of the good man trembled. "What is that?" said he to himself.

After a long silence, a voice, low and tender, said:

"Charlotte! Charlotte! It is I!"

Zacharias trembled, and as he listened, he heard again the tap upon the pane. Then the indignant old man arose, and opened the window.

"Be not afraid, Charlotte," said the voice. "I have come to bring you good news. My father will be here to-morrow." Receiving no response, he said, "Where are you, Charlotte?"

"Here I am," said the old man stepping forward in the moonlight, quite pale, and looking at his rival.

He was a handsome young fellow, tall, slender, with large black eyes, brown face and red lips, shaded with a slight mustache. The apparition of Zacharias had so astonished him that he remained motionless, and as the judge raised his voice, he said: "In the name of heaven, do not cry out! I am not a thief. I love Charlotte!"

"And—she—she?" said Zacharias.

"She loves me, also. Oh, you have nothing to fear, if you are one of her relatives. We were affianced at the fête of Kusnacht."

"Yeri—Yeri Foerster—has not spoken of it to me."

"No, he does not yet know that we are affianced," said the other in a less assured tone. "When I asked his permission, last year, he told me to wait, as his daughter was too young. Then—we pledged ourselves privately. But as I have not Foerster's consent, I have not visited her. I see her only at the town on market-

days. The time appeared so long to us that at last I revealed all to my father. He has promised to see Yeri to-morrow, and I knew this would give Charlotte so much pleasure that I could not refrain, when so near, from coming to announce to her the good news."

The poor judge sank upon a chair and covered his face with both hands, lost in grief. Oh! how he suffered! What bitter thoughts traversed the soul of this good man! What a sad denoûement after so many and such sweet hopes! As for the young mountaineer, he was not reassured by this silence; he leaned against the window, his arms crossed upon his chest, realizing the necessity of gaining the good will, if possible, of this relative of Charlotte.

At the end of a few minutes, Zacharias, raising his head, as though aroused from a dream, demanded:

"What is your name?"

"Karl Imant, monsieur."

"What is your standing?"

"My father hopes to obtain for me his place, as guard-forester of Grinderwald."

There was a long silence; Zacharias regarded this young man with an envious eye.

"She loves you very much?" said he, in a broken voice.

"Oh! yes, monsieur,—we love each other very much!"

Then the judge, looking down sadly upon his thin limbs, and upon his hands, ridged with large veins, murmured, "Yes, she must love him. He is young—he is handsome!"

His head drooped, dejectedly. Suddenly he arose and stepped to the window.

"Young man," said he, "you have done wrong. You should have obtained the consent of Yeri Foerster. But go—you shall hear from me!"

The young mountaineer did not let him repeat the command. He sprang into the path and disappeared behind the trees in the direction of the young harvesters.

"Poor, poor Zacharias!" murmured the good man. "Behold all thine illusions taking flight!"

He returned to his bed, sobbing, and drawing over his head the covering that he might not be heard.

Toward seven o'clock, having regained a little composure, and having bathed his face, he descended to the large breakfast-room, where Yeri Foerster, his wife and Charlotte were awaiting him.

The old man, turning his eyes from the young peasant girl, advanced toward the guard and said to him:

"My friend, I would like to ask a favor of you. You know the son of the guard-forester of Grinderwald, do you not?"

"Karl Imant,—yes, monsieur."

"He is a very handsome youth—and I believe of good morals."

"I think so, too, Monsieur Seiler."

"Does he possess all the qualifications requisite to succeed his father?"

"Yes. He is twenty-one. He knows the management of a forest and the nature of the wood. He can read and write. But all this is not sufficient,—he must have some patronage."

"Ah, well, Master Yeri, I have some influence in the higher administration of the waters and forests. In two or three weeks, Karl Imant shall be guard-forester of Grinderwald, and I ask of you the hand of Charlotte for this brave and worthy youth."

At this conclusion, Charlotte, who at first had blushed and trembled like a leaf, uttered a cry and fell into the arms of her mother. The old guard turned and regarded her with a severe eye, asking: "What ails you, Charlotte? Do you refuse?"

"Oh! no, my dear father, no!"

"Very well, I refuse nothing to my friend, Judge Seiler. Come here, and thank your benefactor."

Charlotte ran, and the good old man, daring then to press her against his heart, regarded her a long time, his eyes filled with tears. Then remarking that he must hasten to make the application for Karl, he left the house, taking only a piece of bread in his fishing-sack for his breakfast.

Fifteen days later, Karl Imant received the commis-

sion of guard-forester, replacing his father, at Grinderwald, and eight days later he espoused little Charlotte.

The guests drank the old wine of Rikevir, so much valued by Yeri Foerster. It seemed to have arrived on purpose for the occasion.

Monsieur Zacharias Seiler was not able to be present at the wedding, being indisposed on that day. Since that time he goes rarely to fish,—and always at Brunnen, toward the lake, on the other side of the mountain.

Mr. John Capers Gilbert, who has written for ROMANCE this picturesque story of the South, remarks concerning the language of the old negress who is supposed to relate it: "Negro dialect is growing obsolete. In a few years it will be heard only in isolated cases, if at all. Even now it is not often encountered in South Carolina, except on the rice plantations along the coast. The schools are killing it, so that only the aged negroes still keep to the old ways of talking."

"MISS NELLIE."

You t'ree big gals wanter h'ar dat ole story about you mar, 'gain, does you? Aunt Peggy done tole you dat story, tell I t'ink you be des sick to deff of it. But, law! I des 'e same can' 'fuse you, same leck I never could 'fuse you mar anyt'ing, my Miss Nellie. So I reckon I'll hatter 'blige you dis las' time.

Well, de war is bin, en de war is ober; de Yankees fit en died for us, en we is free niggers, en I say Lord bless 'em fer it, but I kin say de bes' days I eber see wus de 'fore-de-war days, en de bes' fren's I eber had wus my white peoples.

Ole mauser bought me off ole Colonel Rogers, en fotch me right hur, en sot me down to stay. I wus to be Miss Nellie nigger, en I wus brung up long side er dat gal same es white.

Miss Nellie wus de onliest chile what her par en mar had.

Us wus de bigges' bugs in dis whole country, fer ole mauser, he run in de Legislature, en den someting nudder up to Washington, whar he went en stay awhile; en ole miss she up en went, en Miss Nellie, too, fer a little while.

I know one ting, ole mauser nigger stan' roun' him same leck blackbirds in a field; please Lord, he ain' know he own nigger when he shum (see 'em).

Us had de fines' house en kerriage en de high-steppin'est horses. De cyarpets stan' like fedder-bed fer walk on, en lor! de curtains, en de pictures, en de nig-

gers sailin' roun' in dey libery, en dey aprons white es de drizzlin' snow.

En Christmas come, de house wus pack! Sech er egg-noggin', en tableauin', en dancin', en horseback ridin', en candy-pullin' es dey had gwine on all de time; en sech a lay-out, hit fair makes my mouf water tell yet! That house wus same es a bee-hive, wid de youn' peoples er runnin' in en out, wid dey frolickin', en Miss Nellie de gayes' in de gang, en ole miss en mauser to egg 'em on.

Sometimes I sets down all alone by myself, en study en study, en my heart fair cry out a-longin' fer de good ole days before de war!

But de war hit come en fotch misery en sorrow.

Miss Nellie wus des 'bout sixteen when de war bruck out, en dey warnt no puttier gal nowhere den my young missis.

She allus put me in mine er one er dees wile rose what grows out in de woods; en dat free-handed! Dere warnt nothin' too good to give Peggy, en all de finery come right down; en when ole Sandy Claw come, Peggy never wus to git left.

Well, de war hit come, en ole mauser wus call.

I t'ink de werry day ole mauser left dat house ole miss heart done broke; dat endurin' all dem four year of de war, dat good lady wus a-pinin' en a-dyin'; fer she seem ter er knowed how it wus gwine ter en' from de fuss. En ebery time ole mauser would come home on a furlong en go 'gin, ole miss heart would seem to sink lower en lower. Ebery day, wid her face more paler en her han's more trimbly, ole miss'd git de papers en read de death lis', en ebery day we tank Gord mauser name ain' bin dere.

Well, at las' news come how de Yankees wus a-comin'; how Sherman wus a-trompin' fru' de country 'stroyin' eberyting he han' tech. An' sich a-runnin' en refugeein' as dey had never wus saw! But ole miss 'lowed she wus gwinter stay right dey, ef de worl' tu'n ober, en she done it.

De niggers wus all plum wile, en dey warnt nobody 'tall workin', but de corn-crib wus full, en de smoke-

house, en dey warnt no use to go jump out de fryin'-pan, en maybe git in de fire; but de ting wus to stay whar we bin en hide what we got. So one night me en Miss Nellie en ole Unker Peter, us three, went out in de gyarden, en dig a gret big hole, en take en bury all de silver en julery en ting, en next day ole miss sont Unker Peter out dey to plow up en sow oats, so when de Yankees flop down on us, de oats wus a whole inch out de groun'.

I neber is to fergit de day dem Yankees come. Peoples! dat wus a time in dis worl'. De werry sun seem ter rise pale in de skies dat day, en I know hit muster sot paler den it riz. News wus brung dat de Yankees wus a-marchin' from Savannah straight ter Columbia, a-fighten es dey come. Dat wus de fuss news. Den news come dat dey had got to de Cross-Roads, where dey fit a skirmish de ebenin' before, en dat 'fore night dey would be pun-top us!

I cla' ter Lord when I hur dat, I mos' drap ter de groun', I wus so skeered I ain' know own name.

Well, 'bout noon-time dat day, ole miss call us in her room, en atter she shet to de door, she kneel down en pray wid all her heart dat de Lord in His infamous mercy would teck care of us in de hour of dessolution en trouble, en bring ole mauser back safe en soun'.

Den she rise up, en Miss Nellie run en fole her arms aroun' her comfortin'-like; en buss out cryin' en sobbin' like her heart would break. Atter a while, do, she sorter calm off, en ole miss git up, en open de door en steps out in de passway; en 'fore you could er snap your eyes, she kinder stop en exclaim-out like, en den, sech a shriek es she brung en flop down on de flo', limp same like she bin a rag.

Masters! hit seem like de vowels of wrath wus a-pourin' out on us dat day! I run en kotch hole er ole miss en hilt her up tell Miss Nellie could git dere; en she wus close behin', a-whoopin' en hollerin'. An' when I seed her fetch up kinder short, I look, en I cla' ter Lord, I let ole miss drop back on ter flo', ker-flops! fer it seem like my tongue wus froze, en my legs wus stiff, en a kinder cloud had crope over my eyes. Den

it all come roun' agin' slow-like; en I seed Miss Nellie kneelin' down, holdin' her mar' head, en lookin' like she seen a ghost; I seed ole miss stretch out on the flo' like dead; en I seed what had brung her dere.

Two mens wus a-coming' up de front walk a-totin' somet'ing, what wus stretch out on a kinder board, what dey had fotch in de cyart, what wus hitch out at de gate.

I ain' had to ask what it wus when de mens come in en sot dey burden down, en stan' en look kinder awkerd-like. I ain' say nothin', nobody ain say nothin', but I knowed; I knowed what wus kivered up under dat cloff; but I bin speechless, Miss Nellie wus speechless; de mens wus speechless.

Turreckly, do, one of de mens stoop down, en pull off de cloff, en dere wus ole mauser lyin' cole in death, wid de blood a-stainin' all he breast!

I look at Miss Nellie, en ef I wus to live tell Jedgement Day, I neber is to fergit de look on her face! An' 'fore I could git to her, she throwed up her arms to the skies, en fall ober, en bury her head on her mar, en sich a-moanin' es she had I neber want to yur no more. Den one of de mens spoke out, en said how ole mauser had git kilt de ebenin' before in de skirmish, des when he wus so nigh home; en how, bein' es dey wus comin' long dat way, dey had fotch he poor dead body home.

Den one call me off, en ast where to lay him; en atter I done tell 'em, dey tuck him up, en carry him in de bes' company-room, en lay him down.

I tink I bin crazy dat day; I ain' know what all I done. But somehow or nudder we got ole miss on de bed at las', en dere she lay like de breff wus done gone foreber.

Oh, dere wus misery in dat house dat day! Dat pore gal roam fum one room to de udder, same like she bin mad; a-wringin' her han's, en prayin', en beggin' me to he'p her. Lord knows my heart wus tear up to a fraz dat day; but what could I do but cry en pray wid her.

Atter awhile I got some brandy down ole miss, en she kinder come to herself; en turreckly she open her

eyes en gaze roun' tell she fair skeered me! She wus dat wile-lookin', like she warnt a-seein' nothin' nur hearin' nothin' er nobody. Den she get straight up outen that bed, en walk down de pass-way, en neber stop tell she git spang to de room whar ole mauser wus. She knowed whar he bin; her heart tell her dat. We wus right behine her, en kotch hole to her dress to kinder hole her back; but no, she pull loose, en buss right in.

De mens had laid de ole mauser out, en a white sheet wus ober him; en she walk straight up to de bed en lif' up de sheet, en look for de longes' time. Den she kinder swayed, en 'fore we knowed anyt'ing, she drap right down on him, en when we lif' her up, de blood wus a-streamin' out her mouf; fer her heart had buss clear out her body dat minute; en in a little while she bin done gone foreber! Gone to de bar of Jedgement, wid dat good man by her side, gone togedder fer de golden crowns what wus a-waitin' fer em in de happy Lan' where misery en sorrow neber es to tech 'em no more!

Well, de mens said how de Yankees would soon be along, en dey would hatter be gittin' off, or dey 'd be tuck prisoner; so dey git in dere cyart, en rid off, en we wus lif' alone.

Bimeby ole aunt Manda come in, en we lay ole miss out side en side wid de ole man; en we sont uncle Peter off to give word to ole Miss Calline at de village ten mile off; en atter dat we sot down en wait en see what more wus gwineter come.

Es I sot dere, I wus a-thinkin'. De Bible say how "He move in His mischievous way, His wonder to reform"; but hit seem to me like de good Lord muster hide Hisself dat day, en couldn't see nur hear; fer ef He coulder seed dat pore chile on her knees by dat bed a-wrastlin' wid de misery in her heart, tearin' out her putty hair, en a-beggin' Him to let her die too, He'd 'a'-come to her sho.

Dat wus de longes' day I eber seed. Dis 'bout dus' I hur de niggers a-whoopin' en a-hollerin'; en I look out, en, masters! de whole face of de yearth wus kiv-

ered wid Yankees! Dey wus same like anses in a ness. En 'fore you coulder count ten, de house wus pack fum top to bottom, en dere warnt no spot on dat whole plantation, 'pear like, dat dere warnt one er dose blue coats.

En, lor! de fuss dey had!

I wus so skeered tell I des had to fall down en holler; en sicher tearin' upstairs es dey had; en a whole tu'n of 'em pop right in pun-top us!

Mighty soon, do, de mens seed how it wus, en dey kinder drawed back; en mos' all tu'n roun' en lef'. But some what 'peared like dey wus drunk buss right in, en stan' up en look.

Den one say: "'Pear like dey got a funeral gwine on in hur," en buss out laughin'.

When I hear him speak in dat discontemptious way, my hair riz, en I wus dis 'bout ready to shy a shoe at he head; when hur come a big fuss outside de door; en a young man, what seem to be kinder boss of de whole thing, come a-chargin' in; en de way he did scatter dem mens wus a caution! En when he had cleared de room, he step ober to Miss Nellie en say so kind-like:

"Madam, kin I help you?"

En she raise up, en look at him wid her putty eyes so fuller misery, en say:

"I's pass all help now; see, you done tuck all I got." Den she lif' up de sheet en show him, en de man all-but drap on de flo'! Lord bless dat man! I said it den in my heart, en I say it ergin to-day; Lord bless him in dis worl', en teck him home to glory when he die! In de big black cloud of trouble what wus a-hengin' ober us, he come like a star to shine in de darkness, en lead us safely fru. Lord bless him, I say wid my las' breff; fer he stood a frien' to us dat night!

Fer de longes' time he stood en look at dem pore dead peoples, en den he spoke out:

"Madam," he say, "we has brung you sorrow deeper den tongue kin tell; but 'fore Lord en man, I pledge my life dat fru us no udder drop shall be add to your cup of bitterness!" Den he tu'n roun' en went out.

Bimeby, I crope to de winder en look en listen. He wus standin' wid all he mens roun' him, en wus sayin'

es how dere wus a young 'oman in de house, what had all her peoples lyin' dead aroun' her, en he wus gwinter stan' ter her back. Dey warnt to tech nothin' on dat place 'cep somethin' to eat, en dey warnt to burn nothin', en dat de fuss man vibrate dat law would git hisself shoot. Den he come down a peg, en say es how he knowed dey wus all too brave en true to wanter harm a 'fenceless gal.

At dat dey all got to whoopin' en hollerin', en hurrahin'; en den, atter awhile, he come back en say how he had put a guard roun' eberyt'ing; en nothin' wus gwinter git disturb. En he got down right by dem dead peoples, en dat heart-broken gal, speakin' comfortin' words, till slam daylight, en Miss Nellie had fall off into a kinder stupor, den he riz up; en atter he tuck en writ somethin' what I wus to give to the young lady when she git better, he march off wid all he mens, dis when de sun wus gittin' ready to rise.

Well, des a little atter sun-up, en I had git Miss Nellie off to bed, Unker Peter come wid ole Miss Calline, en dere hit wus a-gin!

En fuss ting we knowed atter Miss Calline had faint off three time, en brung back, dere wus Miss Nellie a-ravin' en pitchin' wid de fever, tell we couldn't hardly hole her in de bed.

En fer six weeks atter her par en mar wus lay in de grabe dat chile wrastle wid deff, wid me en ole Miss Calline en Aunt Manda nussin' night en day. En when she did come back to life, she wus dat change you wouldn't er knowed her. Thin, tell you could fair see fru her! en all her putty yaller hair cut off. It wus nigh three month 'fore she could eben crawl roun' de house.

We dis had to coax her to live, fer it 'peared like she wanted to die sho nuff.

Ebery day I say, "I will give her de letter what de man writ," en ebery day I say, "No, better not bring dat night back to her mine yet."

But one day, when she wus a-lyin' on de lounge, quietlike, I got it out en gin it to her.

I thought den, dere wus a sorter shine in her eyes

when she read it, en I seed a little ring fall out, what she picked up en put on her finger, en said it wus a Frien'ship-ring, en de man said how she mus' wear it tell he come back.

It warnt long atter dat 'fore she wus mos' like herself agin.

I neber is to forgit one ebenin' 'bout six month atter dat day. It wus in de summer-time, dis 'fore dus', en Miss Nellie wus a-walkin' roun' in de flower-gyarden, de sweetes' flower dere wus, wid her white dress a-trailin' on de grass, en her little short curls a-blowin' in de wind; wid one yaller rose pin in her belt, when hur come a horse lopin' down de big road, en fetch up right at our gate; en de man lighted en come a-walkin' in. En bless your heart, if it wusn't that young soldier-man come back, dis es big es life, en fine es a fiddle!

When Miss Nellie seed him, hit seem like all de light what had gone a-followin' de sun what had sot, come back, en git in her eyes.

She run to meet him, en gin him bof her han's; en he kneel down en kiss dat gal han's same like she bin a queen.

En dere ain' no prodigal son eber come back what got a bigger lay-out den dat young man had. En right dere he tuck up, tell he done court en married dat gal, en 'deem back he ring.

Miss Nellie wus my young missis 'fore de war; en she my missis now; en right by dat chile I means to stick tell death call me or her, one.

When dat young man tuck Miss Nellie, he tuck Miss Nellie nigger; and dat how come part de year us lives to de New York, en part de year right here to old Black Swamp; en yonder my Miss Nellie stan'in' at de window; you better run en see ef she ain' call you.

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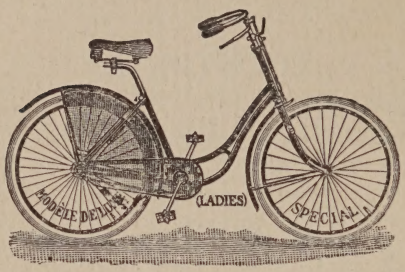

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Reason is an admirable gift; but the story-reader never likes it quite so well as the daring recklessness of passionate love, which flings prudence to the winds,—feeling the world well lost. Therefore there will be few to sympathize with the judicious hero of this uncommon story, written for ROMANCE by Arthur Beardsley Mitchell.

A GOODBYE.

It was a small party, but a choice one. Mrs. Langdon Wing had just returned from a long sojourn in Europe, where she had come to know many "new" people. She prided herself upon her discretion and discrimination. Indeed, a report had been circulated that it was only in Mrs. Langdon Wing's parlors, among all the parlors within the sacred pale of SOCIETY, that one might meet really brainy people, who, at the same time, possessed unexceptionable manners, and wore good clothes. The source of this report had been uncharitably suspected to be not far from her own "boudoir"—but Mrs. Langdon Wing's was truly a very nice house,—and so thought young Dr. George Dover, as he stood there one evening, under a softly-glowing piano-lamp—without any odor. Mrs. Langdon Wing's lamps were said to be the only ones in town (could this report have emanated also from that same "boudoir"?) which never put themselves in evidence through more than two of the five senses.

Mrs. Wing was immensely flattered to see Dr. Dover, whom she had been coaxing and inviting for a long time. His researches in microscopy had brought him to the front in a wonderful way, for so young a man,—for he was said to be very young, though the gray hairs in his beard, and a certain severe aspect which his face wore in repose, would indicate that he was nearer forty than thirty. He wrote articles in the learned reviews, and his brother-physicians spoke of him with awe. He was undeniably distinguished in appearance, with his tall, well-made figure, and his pointed, close-clipped blond beard. In spite of the almost forbidding expres-

sion of his features, and especially of his eyes, which were of a deep, almost sombre, blue, he was handsome, and he gave an impression of exclusiveness by a general coldness of manner, which he allowed to melt into cordiality only under the most extreme provocation. Therefore his smiles were much prized, and Mrs. Langdon Wing, having evoked several of these marks of approbation, flattered herself that she was one of the favored few whom this "difficult" gentleman liked.

She had devoted herself to her distinguished guest this evening even longer than she felt was strictly permissible in a hostess who had at least twenty others to entertain,—and she had introduced him to five or six people, all of whom, though undeniably brilliant in certain special lines, failed evidently to impress this lofty young doctor. His *ennui* was so apparent that Mrs. Wing, who was closely watching him from a divan not far away, was in despair.

"Why is it," she queried discomposedly of an intimate friend with whom she was stealing a few moments of "off guard" conversation, "that great people do not hesitate to show when they are bored?"

"My dear," replied the friend didactically, "you are now probing the ages. In old times, the Great, who were then usually sultans and satraps and all that sort of thing, not only showed that they were bored, but chopped off the heads of those individuals who had the temerity to bore them. Nowadays the heads are only figuratively chopped off,—but their Majesties the Great are no fonder of being bored, I fancy, than they were forty centuries or so ago."

"Historical information, my dear," returned her hostess, "may be interesting,—but it is not philosophy, and it does not explain things."

"Oh, if you wish me to go into the human nature of the situation, and why men are cross, and women are whimsical,—and people whom you and I think calculated to entertain each other, only tire each other to death,—then, my love, I utterly refuse to——"

"Goodness!" interrupted Mrs. Wing in a whisper, "what have I done? That exquisite Mrs. Perry,—the

widow of that rich old General Perry, who died three or four years ago at Cannes,—you were there, don't you know?—went out into the conservatory half-an-hour ago with my Amy,—and the nurse has been sent to take Amy off to bed, and I have not set eyes on Mrs. Perry since. What if she should have been left out there all alone,—and she is the most refined,—and the most brilliant creature! I am just counting on her for my receptions next month,—she is musical, you know, and poetical, and all that—and now she will hate me. Goodbye, love. I must devise a *coup d'état.*"

A moment later, the intimate friend found herself talking with the gentleman who had been wearying the great Dr. Dover, while the lively hostess was bearing that gentleman away—his face wearing a relieved look—toward the conservatory. He recognized the fact, of course, that Mrs. Wing was a species of fraud,—but she gave charming dinners, and—well,—there are some people by whom it is not half-bad to be deceived. Mrs. Wing was one of them.

"You must know her, Dr. Dover," she was saying in her most vivacious tone, "really the most delightful woman I have seen for years. I happened to be at Cannes when her husband died, four years ago,—everybody was so sorry for her,—though he was an old gouty fellow,—and left all his money to her,—he was a millionaire,—but she is so lovely,—tall, and brunette,—though her skin is fair enough to go with a Swedish wig,—such magnificent dark eyes!—like Evangeline's, you will think,—every one does. Where can she be?"—peering around through the open door of her beautiful conservatory. "Ah! there she is,—in among the palms yonder, and she is keeping my small daughter up! There is the nurse, too, waiting to take her to bed! What do you mean, my dear Mrs. Perry,"—advancing with her finger shaking in the air, and with a look of roguish reproach upon her face,—"what do you mean by detaining Amy from her couch, *mon amie?* Dr. Dover, let me present you to my dear friend, Mrs. Perry. You have heard of Dr. Dover, Mrs. Perry? We are all very proud of him."

She turned to her little girl,—for Mrs. Wing prided herself upon the strictness of her domestic discipline,—and did not have time to notice that the color had entirely deserted the handsome face of her distinguished guest, and that the elegant composure of the wealthy widow was distinctly ruffled as she bowed to the gentleman who had been so suddenly presented to her. To Eleanor Perry, indeed, a certain familiar scene from one of Heyse's stories had suddenly recurred, which almost matched the one in which she found herself now taking part. The recollection was all that brought her to herself. A moment later, when Mrs. Wing, having dispatched the child with her nurse, turned to address a word to these two guests of hers whom she was so solicitous to entertain, she found them discussing the palm-trees, under the spreading branches of which they were standing. They showed an interest which assured her that she had made a lucky hit in bringing together two "botany-fiends," as she herself mentally dubbed them, in the vernacular of SOCIETY.

"Don't fail to come in for Madame Chamouni's song in about five minutes," she said, as she turned to leave them, convinced that they were sure to be congenial,—(and would accept her next invitation!) "I rely on you to bring her in, Dr. Dover,—she is absurdly fond of Madame Chamouni, as I happen to know"—and she swept away, with a last playful gesture of confidence.

Eleanor Perry sank down upon the rustic bench where she had been sitting with little Amy, and motioned to her companion to sit beside her.

"We had better go out with the others—perhaps,"—he stammered.

"No," she responded calmly, "no,—I am glad to see you again. It—it brings back—many things. But we will not speak of those,—no, no, so much has happened since then!"

"You,—I beg your pardon, Mrs. Perry,—but really, one would think the old days were here now. You are as fair as ever you were ten years ago."

"I do not wish compliments from you, Dr. Dover," she began coldly. "I never liked them,—and you once

used to respect my feelings. Oh, let us talk of the Island,—the dear little Island. Are your father and mother still living? I suppose that your brothers and sisters are all married and moved away."

"Yes, my father and mother are well,—and only my sister Esther,—she was married, but was left a widow,—is with them. She has two children, and they are a comfort to my father and mother. The house looks just as it used to, and we can still see the rectory across the bay. But how does it happen that you are over here? I heard that you were never coming any more."

"No, I was not, and after the death of my father and mother, three or four years ago, I sent for my two sisters. They are much younger than I—my brother and my sister Juliet died, you know. I put them at school in Switzerland. After my husband left me, I was so wretchedly lonely that I went and stayed with them, and we had a dear little home together,—but the girls were homesick, and so we came back. They are going out on the Island in a day or two, and they are planning a good many alterations there. We shall be there all summer, probably. You will see us then perhaps?"

"I—hope so."

"And—let me give you my card. Perhaps you may find time to come and see us sometimes here, Dr.—Dr. Dover,"—she did not mean to hesitate over his name, but she had always called him "George" before. "I know that you must be very busy,—you are getting to be so famous! I heard of you over there, too,—and was proud of my old playmate. Let me congratulate you on all your success."

His color rose a little as she uttered these words in a half-playful tone. With a courteous "Thank you," he dismissed the subject, and asked, "Did you really like it better over there—Mrs. Perry?"

"Oh,—no—I was unhappy there,—and I am just as unhappy here, for all that I can see,—but never mind that. You must have been there a good deal. Mrs. Wing was saying that she used to meet you in Paris. Where else were you?"

"Wherever there is a hospital or a medical school," he answered, smiling.

"Oh, I knew that you were sure to do something when you chose the medical profession. Your father was a remarkable physician, though he lived always in the country. It was in your blood. And have you built that wonderful hospital out on the Island yet?"

"What hospital?"

"Don't you remember that you were always going to build a hospital which should be big enough to hold all the sick people in the world, and that you were going to make them all well?"

He laughed,—and for a moment his face lost the guarded, almost strained, expression which it had worn since they had first begun to talk. "Oh, yes!" he said, "I had forgotten. It was apropos of old Dakin. Do you remember old Dakin? He used to drive the express-wagon, and he was dreadfully deformed. I have always been peculiarly susceptible to any sort of deformity, you know——"

"Yes?" she interrupted him to say, quite unnecessarily, and with a nervous shrillness in her voice.

"Oh, yes. You will recall it, for I used often to speak of it,—and Dakin, being a hunchback, and so egregiously out of proportion in every way, was a special eyesore to me. I thought that he had not been properly doctored, and I told him once that he ought to go to my father, and have his case attended to. I shall never forget his harsh laugh when I said it, and how he flung back to me some such retort as this: 'I'll have to wait I till gets wings, boy, before I gets rid of this blessed hump!' I asked my father if this was true, and he told me that it was, and explained to me that, if Dakin were to pay him a thousand dollars, he could not do anything for him. Then I began to scheme, myself,—and hence the colossal enterprise, of which I am flattered to have you remember so much. But alas!—I am no nearer to curing old Dakin and his ilk than my father was."

"No?" she breathed forth wearily,—and for a moment they both sat silent. Then there was a sudden hush in

the parlors outside, which recalled them to themselves. A woman's voice began an operatic aria.

"It is Madame Chamouni," she said quickly. "We have stayed too long. Mrs. Wing will expect us. Come."

George Dover was a cold man by nature, and he thought that his more than thirty years of life and its varied experiences had steeled him to the tender influences of love; but Eleanor Perry had always had a peculiar influence over him. His heart was beating fast now, and his whole being was suffused with that delicate, enchanting warmth which he had always felt when he was beside her; and yet—he had decided, decided in cold blood years ago, when they were both of them but twenty, that he could not afford to marry a poor girl,—and he had gone out into the world to seek his fortune. Rumors had come to him that she had grieved for him,—one of his sisters had even told him that "Eleanor had been ill, and it was nothing in the world but his going which had affected her"; and then she had written to him once or twice,—pretty, girlish letters. He remembered just how they had looked. He had answered one of them briefly and coolly, in accordance with the policy which he had marked out for himself. Then he had heard that she had married rich old General Perry, and had thought how much better that was for her than a long engagement to a poor young fellow like himself, to be followed by a wearing life of small economies and uncertain social and professional struggles. Then he had heard, through the gossips in the little island-town where their love-dream had spent itself, that the old man was dead, and that his rich young widow would live abroad hereafter.

But she had come back,—come back with all her beauty—all that subtle charm of manner which had made him love her as he had never loved any other woman,—as he now began to see he never could love any other woman;—and, after all that had passed, she had still been kind to him! He felt a glow of shame,—hard, wise, polished, successful as he was—when he remembered the sweet, girlish blush which had swept over her

face when that unmitigated snob of a Mrs. Langdon Wing had brought him up to her. All that his sister had told him in the old days on the Island must then have been true. Well,—he was able with what he already had in hand, and with the future which any candid judge must concede him, to marry whom he might please, even the widow of a millionaire like General Perry. He had come to think of marriage as rather of a nuisance,—it unsettled all of one's habits of living, and he was perfectly comfortable as he was. Still,—she was very beautiful,—a woman any man might be proud of,—and she would have a pride in his professional success. He would accept her invitation to spend an evening with her. He would go as soon as he could.

Only a few days passed before he stood at her door. A storm was raging, and he had felt pretty sure of finding her at home and alone, and he was right. Her sisters were away, and she was reading under a lamp in front of her open fire, amid surroundings of such luxury that selfish Dr. George Dover beamed and expanded in a sybaritic refinement of pleasure as he stretched himself on a divan opposite her, and listened to the sound of the sleet on the plate-glass windows.

All of the half-embarrassment which he had fancied that he detected in her manner at Mrs. Wing's was gone now. She was the woman of the world—bright, elegant, anxious to please. If there had been any sentimentalism in her bearing the other night, it was all gone now. He was not sure that she was not more charming than ever in this mood, as she sat before him, in a languid yet perfectly graceful attitude which she had always dropped into, he remembered, when she was talking earnestly,—and in a marvellous gown of some sort of silky black stuff, with glints of white in it.

She gave him little time to think, and he was contented to sit and look at her, and hear her clever talk, in which she led him on to speak freely of his life abroad; she imitated the *patois* of peasants, the shallow chatter of the salons, and the slang of the studios; he told her of his studies, his ambitions;—they touched everything but that strange past,—and he was in a sort

of dream until the striking of a wonderful clock, with a tuneful chime and a little clash of bells at the end, awoke him to the fact that he was staying too late.

After her visitor had gone, Eleanor Perry, who was at heart one of the most trustful and loving of women, and who, on that little Island out in the Sound, had cherished for this cold, proud, intellectual man a love which he could only imagine, found herself trembling with excitement. She had never understood why he had gone away in those early days without a word of love to her. They had been mates during all of their childhood. It had been understood between them that they were to go to all the merry-makings together, listen to all the concerts together, choose each other out of all the rest for companionship. Nothing had ever been said of love. It was all a matter of course,—she was his and he was hers. Then she could remember when he had begun to be different. They were at a little church entertainment. He looked gloomy and uneasy. When she and her sisters were ready to go home, he had left. She did not understand it. She thought that perhaps he was not well,—but there was an indefinable something in his manner which roused her pride. She determined to watch herself a little. He came over to the rectory two or three times after that. They all played games together, but he was grave and embarrassed. She had caught him looking at her with troubled eyes, but he made no attempt to see her alone. Then he had come over one evening to tell them all that he was going into the city to take medical lectures,—and that he never expected to have any more good times. There was nothing before him but hard work. He had looked very sad when he said this, and she had wanted to tell him that she would write him long, merry letters, and they would have plenty of good times yet,—but he had not said a word about writing. In her heart this had made her love him more wildly than ever. She had an indefinite idea that George was being very honorable. He was poor and he was not going to say a word which should bind her,—but with that girlish perverseness which no

amount of education can expunge from the feminine character, she wanted to be bound,—she did not care for poverty, for hardship, for anything, if he would only love her. It had not occurred to her that he could abstain from winning her because he did not feel ready on his own part to face the difficulty of providing for two,—of accepting the responsibilities of marriage, even years away. Poor girl! She had never thought of that. She did not think of it even now.

Then, after sleepless nights and heart-breaking days, when everybody thought that she was ill, and needed a doctor, and George's father had given her "blue pills," and quinine and powders after the old fashion, she had written a little letter to George. She could never forget when the answer came. Not even her sister Juliet,—she had died while Eleanor had been absent in Europe, but she had been her other self throughout their whole life together—had known what was in that letter, nor when it had been opened. For two days she had carried it about on her heart without opening it at all. She dreaded to see what was in it,—and yet it was from George, and inexpressibly dear. Then she had opened it, with a suffocation at her heart which made her little hands quiver and her breath come in gasps. And what a short, conventional letter it had been! It had been "pleasant to find that he had not been forgotten"; she was "good to write"; he "hoped she was well"; he was "very busy, and so much interested that he thought he might one day get to be a doctor." He sent love to all the family. He thought the books of which she had written must be very good reading, and he congratulated her upon getting so much culture. There was not a word about another letter from her. Her whole being was on fire with rage and mortification. She tore the letter up and burned the pieces. She thought of all his tender looks and words,—how he had always singled her out first of all,—how he had told her that no other girl in the village was so pretty,—could dance so well, ride so well, read so well, skate so well, as she! And how her heart had glowed when he had spoken to her so!

Then the days passed on, and she had tried to get over her love for him; but one day it had all come back, —and she felt such a longing to see his face and to hear his voice that she had written another letter to him,— she turned crimson to this day whenever she thought of it and of the heart-sickening days while she waited for a reply. Then he had come home on a little vacation at Easter time, and had sent word when he went away that, after seeing her and the others at church Easter morning, he had fully intended to call and pay them a little visit, but he had been so busy that he had not been able to manage it;—and then General Perry had come to the Island, and he had petted her and been very kind to her, and her sore little heart had found a refuge in his fatherly love. They had travelled, and in the excitement and change she had tried to be happy. After she had been married four short years her husband had died.

And now here she was four years a widow,—free, rich, more beautiful than ever,—and George Dover, established in his profession, handsome, cold, polished, and with that air of exclusiveness which made his attentions precious, had come back to her. She did not know why he had treated her so in the old days. Her only theory was that he had not loved her,—that she had been only like a lesser sister to him,—that he had seen that she was getting to be too fond of him, and had taken the only honorable way to check her unwomanly emotion,—and yet, in her soul, she felt that he had loved her, and had wondered at the mystery of it all. How ought she to treat him? She did not believe that her money had anything to do with this new attraction which he had conceived for her,—and she,— she loved him just as she had loved him in those old days. She was willing to wait until he could explain the past. But he had asked her if he might come again —perhaps matters might yet be adjusted between them —and still—ah! there was something else, something which she felt might stand as a firmer separating wedge between them than all the past.

As she sat in the dark in her own room, leaning out into the mild winter night, and trying to collect her-

self, she heard a faint wail from an inner apartment, and she sprang to her feet and ran toward it. On a richly draped bed there a child was writhing and moaning, as though in pain. On the other side of the room, his nurse lay in a heavy slumber, but Eleanor did not waken her. She bent over the child, lifted his tiny body, and rocked him gently into silence, gazing into his strange, shrunken little face with a look of ineffable love. His voice had seemed like that of a newly-born babe, but his face showed that he must be five or six years old. It wore an habitual scowl, and except for its great, solemn eyes,—like his mother's, but without their brilliant gleam,—it was plain, to repulsiveness. His head was peaked, and was set low between his shoulders, on which rested an unsightly hump. But no bright and perfect child was ever surrounded by more of luxury and tended with more unceasing care than this unfortunate one.

"He is surely growing better and stronger," his mother whispered to herself. "Even though he may never be large and straight, he will soon learn to talk and walk like other children,"— for little Clarence could speak only two or three words, and the few of Eleanor's friends who had seen him could not hope that he would ever become intelligent; but she would not allow herself to believe that it was anything but his prolonged weakness and ill-health which retarded his mental development. As soon as his body became strong enough to allow his mind to grow, then he would talk to her, she believed, and make a delightful companion for her; some merciful doctor had encouraged her in this theory.

In a week Dr. George Dover came again to see her. This time there were other callers, but he outstayed them.

"I hope I did not come inopportunely," he murmured, when they had at last said good-night.

"You could scarcely come inopportunely," she replied, smiling. "I shall always be glad to see you."

"You forget that you and I are sitting here alone," he reminded her playfully. "This is not the time for the language of society."

"Oh, I am sincere," she insisted. "I was never accused by my worst enemies of being anything but sincere. And people who have—suffered—as—I have," she faltered, "can be nothing but sincere."

He looked at her keenly. He wondered if she had grieved much for the old man who was gone. He knew nothing about the child. Mrs. Langdon Wing was aware that there was a child, and that he was an invalid, but even she had never seen him, and she had not happened to mention his existence to Dr. Dover.

"One would not think that you had suffered,—El—Eleanor," he said quickly. "Forgive me,—but the old name—I always liked it,—slipped out before I knew it."

She flushed like a girl. "I like it, too," she said simply. "It seems to bring back the old days when I was happy. I do not mind your calling me Eleanor."

"Thank you," he said, in a voice so deep and full of meaning that she felt almost embarrassed. He paused a moment. "I was going to say, Eleanor, that one would never suspect from your face that you had had a care nor a trouble. Your brow is as smooth as it was when you were eighteen,—while I—and I am less than a year older than you, if I remember rightly—I am wrinkled and gray, and people take me for forty. I have had a lonely, careworn, hard-working life."

"I am sorry," she said softly, the sense of his strange fatuity, or his strange misunderstanding, rushing over her again,—"but—but you do not know all of my life. You have never mentioned my child. I do not know that you have heard of him." She turned pale under his look of surprise, and her faint smile had something piteous in it.

"Your child?" he repeated with sudden coldness.

"There!" she exclaimed. "He is crying now"—as a feeble wail came stealing down the broad stairway. "I will show you that I, too, have suffered."

She sprang from the room, and presently returned, bearing in her arms the fragile, malformed child. He had stopped crying, and as she seated herself, and laid him across her lap, the hunchback turned his dark,

inscrutable eyes, so like yet so unlike her own, dully upon the face of their visitor.

An involuntary shudder, which she rather felt than saw, ran over the man's frame. With all his experience in his profession, he could never see such a being as this child without this awful revulsion of his nature.

"And yet,—remember, George, this little creature is the dearest thing on earth to me—you say that I cannot have suffered! See how little you understood!"

The tears ran down her cheeks. He could have caught her in his arms and comforted her in his compassion, but the tiny, misshapen figure of the child lay between them.

"N—o," he said slowly, "I—I did not understand, as you say, Eleanor. Forgive me."

When he took his leave, his whole nature was on fire. For a few days he had allowed the old love, which he had stamped out in his youth, to repossess him. All the bars of coldness and of calculation had been let down. He had not seen how his comfort could be very much interfered with, nor his career hampered by marrying this woman, who suited him so well. But this child! What a frightful little object it was!

When he came again, he was told that the child was very ill, and that Eleanor could not see him. When he left the house, he paced the streets for hours. "If the child should die!" he thought. "If the child should die!—But if he should live,—oh, even if she loves me as I feel sure that she does, I could not ask her to marry me. I could never live with *him*, and she would never allow him to be sent away from her. Even if I did not see him, the mere thought that he was in the house would make me ill." He shuddered again. "I cannot help it. It would be useless to fight against it. Yet,—if the child should die!—but if he should live, I had better get away. I cannot do my work,—I cannot think of anything but her from morning till night. I will take up with that offer that came to me last week, —and leave America."

He heard the next day that the child was worse, and that a day or two more must decide the matter. The

brief time was an eternity to him. Poor Mrs. Langdon Wing had miscalculated in regard to these two brilliant beings with whom she had hoped to decorate her assemblies during the season. They had no heart to go anywhere after that meeting in the conservatory, and, save for a formal card-leaving on her day at home, they never went near her beautiful parlors again all winter.

On the night when the crisis came in the child's illness, it was Eleanor's chosen task to watch with him from seven o'clock until midnight. She was distraught and unbalanced from the long strain to which she had been subjected, and she had not slept soundly for a week. She felt herself oppressed to-night with an irresistible drowsiness. Several times she found herself dropping off into unconsciousness, to be roused by the feeble wail that she knew so well, and to tremble lest she should fail to remember to give the medicine, —on which, the doctor had warned her, her child's life might depend. Again she felt herself going to sleep, and again she rose with a start to find that she had almost passed another medicine-time. The child was half-awake, and she administered the dose. Then she sat down upon the divan, where she was attempting to hold herself erect, and a strange mood descended upon her. Her thoughts dwelt upon George Dover. She acknowledged to herself anew that he was the only man whom she had really loved, and she almost sobbed aloud that she was to be a second time sundered from him. "He must have felt something of the old attraction for me, that night when we met so strangely at Mrs. Wing's," she reasoned, "or else he would not have come so soon to see me,—and it is plain to me that I cast a sort of a spell upon him,—but he tries to shake it off. Since he has seen my poor baby, perhaps he cannot love me. I could feel that every fibre of his being revolted at the sight of my poor darling. He could never marry the mother of such a child. It would always stand like a ghost between us,—and he might be afraid that, if I should bear other children, they might be like Clarence. —But if Clarence should die to-night—suppose that his miserable, painful little life should be ended,—suppose

I should forget to give the medicine—oh!" she cried, "oh, what am I thinking! I am a wretch! I am a murderer! God forgive me! Oh, I have had a horrible dream! I did not think these things while I was awake! I had a nightmare. Oh, I hope I have not slept over!" She rushed to the gilded clock on the mantel, and thrust back the masses of her hair which she had unbound in her agitation; but it was minutes before her distended eyes could read the hour in the dim light. No, it was only a little past the time. Her nervousness abated. She gave the drops, and it seemed to her that the child looked better. She sat down close beside him, where she could mark every change which passed over his wasted face, and she was able to serve out her allotted period without prematurely calling up one of the tired nurses.

Two days later, Dr. George Dover again sought Eleanor's house. He had come to his decision. "If the child is worse, I will stay," he said to himself, as he waited in the parlor to see Eleanor. "If he is better, I will go."

Presently, weak and haggard,—but not more so than he was,—she stood before him. Her long vigil had revealed lines and pallors in her face which he had not suspected, but her eyes were bright and brave.

"He is better, Dr. Dover," she said, half-conscious that she was pushing him away forever by her words. "I am told now that, unless some new and unexpected development occurs, my boy may live as long as I do, and be my comfort and solace, as he is now."

There was, after all, a half-note of defiance in her tone. Instinctively, though she could not know what he was thinking, she wished him to understand that she was for her child against all the world.

"That—that is good," he faltered. Then he paused. He thought that he had fortified himself to speak the next words calmly, but great beads of sweat stood out on his forehead when he tired to pronounce them.

"I must not detain you, Eleanor," he blurted forth at last, in a hoarse voice which he could scarcely recognize as his own, "but I felt that, since I have had a most

advantageous offer to go to Russia, and study in the hospitals there, I wanted to say goodbye to you. I shall be gone for months,—perhaps for years."

"To Russia?" She turned very pale.

"Yes. They are experimenting there with the cholera in a wonderful way. I shall probably sail within the week. Goodbye, Eleanor. It has been a strange fate which has thrown us together again."

"Yes," she said, with the whiteness creeping faster and faster up her face, but speaking very firmly, "it has been a strange fate, as you say. Goodbye."

This story, by Joseph Montet, will take the minds of its readers back some years to the period when it seemed as though everybody were mad on the subject of getting around the globe in the shortest possible time. The present comparative indifference on the subject is, perhaps, but the lull before the excitement attendant upon the coming invention of the air-ship. Isabel Smithson has made the tale into English for ROMANCE.

"BEWARE OF THE BOMB!"

I WAS looking over the papers in the smoking-room of a Paris café. My eye chanced to fall upon the *Echoes of the Stage* column, and I exclaimed aloud:

"At it again!"

A Frenchman sitting near me looked up in wonder at my petulant tone, so I hastened to explain, speaking fluently, in very bad French:

"*Round the World in Eighty Days* is on the boards again. Will they ever have done with that absurd affair? They seem to think it a feat equal to the labors of Hercules."

The Frenchman looked shocked.

"Phileas Fogg was no better than a tortoise!" I cried boastfully. "I could do much better than he——"

"You can go round the world in less than eighty days?" asked my hearer slowly, and I answered in the same tone: "I will go round the world in seventy days if you like."

"I take you up!" he cried.

"What do you bet?"

"Five thousand francs."

"Done," said I, and we exchanged cards, and bows.

That was how it came about that I left Paris for the East on the 5th of January, and stepped on board a transatlantic steamer from a New York pier on the 5th of March. So far I had not lost a minute, and now it only remained to be seen whether I should reach Havre in seven days as the steamship company promised. It would be a close shave at best. A variety of detentions might occur; a slight accident to the machinery, and all would be lost.

I was nearly consumed with anxiety, but the ship acted up to her reputation, and on the 12th of March I stepped once more on to French soil.

I cast the ship a look of gratitude as she lay at the Havre pier letting off steam from her monstrous boiler. Then I glanced at my watch. It was four in the afternoon; there was plenty of time for me to dine at my ease and catch the six-forty express. That would bring me to Paris at half-past eleven. I took out my time-table to make sure. As I ran my eye down the column of figures, an inspiration came to me.

"Where's the use of starting this evening!" I said to myself, "if I get there too early, it will look as if I were afraid of losing the wager. How much better to arrive at the very last second, with brilliancy and dash and dramatic effect, just as they do on the stage. That would be worthy of a genius! Now, here is a train which leaves Havre to-morrow morning at 6.55, and reaches the Saint Lazare Station as 11.30. The time fixed for me to meet the fellow at the office of the *Sémaphore* just behind the Stock Exchange is before the first stroke of noon. I can easily go from Saint-Lazare to the Exchange in eight minutes, in a cab, so there is nothing to prevent my appearing in the nick of time, just as Phileas Fogg did, after making every one's heart palpitate with suspense. That's settled. I shall not go on until to-morrow!"

Accordingly, I went with my baggage to the best hotel, dined comfortably, took a walk through the town smoking a cigar, and returned at ten o'clock to go to bed.

"I must take the 6.55 train to-morrow morning," I said to the hotel-proprietor; "can you have me wakened in time?"

"We have a trustworthy man on purpose for that work," was the reply.

"That may be," said I skeptically, "but, after all, if you could let me have an alarm-clock, I would feel more safe."

"I will lend you my own, although I assure you it is unnecessary," said the host, and accordingly I carried the tiny clock to my room, wound the alarm, set it at

six, stood it on a little table beside the bed, and went to sleep with a quiet mind.

I was in a heavy slumber when I felt my arm being shaken violently.

"What's the matter?" I grumbled without opening my eyes.

"You have only just time, sir," said a voice in my ear.

"Time for what?" I asked, looking up drowsily.

"To catch your train," was the reply.

I sat up and glanced at the clock. It was half-past six!

Without another word, I leaped from the bed with such precipitation that I threw down the table with the little clock; dashed into my clothes; crowded my few belongings into my trunk frantically; flew down the stairs, four at a time; sprang into the stage which was awaiting me, and hardly drew breath until I was on the train.

Ouf! What a close squeeze! Two minutes more and I would have lost my bet. However, all's well that ends well; I had my ticket, my trunk was on the train, the whistle sounded,—I was off for Paris.

When I entered the St. Lazare station the hands of the big clock pointed to half-past eleven. I hailed a cab, and learned that there was time for me to take my trunk with me.

At that moment it appeared in the arms of two porters who were carrying it with the greates care. Confound them, how slow they were! What fool ever accused the railway companies of handling baggage roughly? I hastened towards the men exclaiming,

"Be quick, now!"

I had hardly uttered the words when a heavy hand was laid on my shoulder, and, turning round to see the cause of such familiarity, I found himself face to face with a gendarme.

"What is the matter with you?" I asked in amazement.

"Matter enough," replied the man in a jeering tone, tightening his hold; "you will see!"

Behind the gendarme came two railway officials.

They stooped over my trunk solemnly, turned their heads as if listening, then stood up and exchanged a glance which plainly said: "There is not a doubt of it."

"They are crazy," I thought, but then a horrible conviction flashed through my brain. Whether the men were sane or not, one thing was sure: it was forty minutes past eleven. At all hazards I must make my escape. I shook myself free of the gendarme's grasp, and knocking over two or three people in my flight dashed madly away; but was stopped by two custom-house officers who seized me by the collar. I was dragged, protesting and gesticulating, back to where my trunk stood. There was evidently a mistake somewhere.

"Let me go," I cried, "let me go! And I swear I will come back in an hour——"

The gendarme's lips described a smile behind his thick mustache, as he took possession of me again, this time with both hands.

"Come now; don't try that," said one of the railway officials, "you may as well confess. You arrived from New York in great haste and under suspicious circumstances. Who are you? What have you in this trunk?"

"Clothes, nothing but my clothes," I answered, speaking worse French than usual in my agitation.

"No explosives?" insisted the official.

"Explosives! What for? I am not a pyrotechnist, nor a chemist."

"Then what is the meaning of this strange noise? Inside your trunk there is a sound of machinery—in short, an infernal machine. Yesterday, the London police arrested four American anarchists who had similar articles in their possession. You are known to be one of the gang."

I listened in speechless wonder to his words. I looked at my trunk, and my wonder increased to stupefaction as I heard a metallic *tick-tack* inside. Suddenly there was a loud ringing report—like a signal for an explosion. "Beware of the bomb!" shrieked some one; officers and porters scattered in all directions, and even the gendarme moved away. I alone remained, like a

hero. I tore open the trunk and pulled out the clothes in feverish haste. All at once I felt something hard inside a night-shirt, and the next moment drew out and exposed to view—a little clock!

I had unknowingly packed up the hotel-keeper's property, and it was striking the alarm six hours behind time.

"Confound the old turnip!" I cried, throwing it down furiously. I was answered by a loud peal of laughter from the spectators.

Then putting my head down, like a wild boar that scents the hounds, I dashed toward the cab again and sprang in, shouting to the driver,

"I'll give you a louis if you get me to *Place de la Bourse* before noon."

Seven minutes and a half later the cab was tearing up to the Stock Exchange; I jumped out, flew upstairs to the *Sémaphore* office, burst into the room like a hurricane, and remarked in a stentorian tone,

"Here I am, gentlemen!"

The next instant the first stroke of noon sounded from the Exchange clock.

This quaint picture of real, everyday life in Japan is written for ROMANCE by Mary McNeil Scott.

YANO AND THE RIVER-GOD.

Kami Sama was a river-god, who owned a shrine in the corner of our garden-lot; Yano, a small heathen of fifteen, the youngest and brightest of my Japanese domestics.

Was the day too wet for my stately cook to risk the bespattering of his lacquered clogs, and immaculate "tabi" (socks)? Then Yano was sent to do the shopping and marketing.

When the pretty house-maid Suga happened to lose any of her relatives, which she did frequently, and always, by a strange coincidence, on the eve of some great matsuri (festival), Yano was brought in to make beds and wash dishes. The gardener made him fill the gold-fish pond, and weed my foreign posies. If anything was lost, Yano lost it. When a cup appeared minus the handle, Yano was invariably the culprit. He was general scapegoat as well as drudge among the servants, and when called into my presence to answer for some misdemeanor, which, in all probability, he had not committed, he attempted not the slightest excuse, but would fall prone at my feet his jetty, close-cropped head upon the floor, and his hands spread pigeon-toed before him in such a touching manner that my heart always melted at the sight.

I think that the little rascal strongly suspected this weakness on my part, there was such a knowing flash in his small, shining eyes as he raised his head to thank me for my great clemency and mercy, and he could scarcely wait until he got outside of the door before bursting into one of those strange, quavering, falsetto songs of the Japanese peasantry which express for them lightness of heart.

Although Yano's incidental duties were legion, he was originally engaged to amuse O Alan San, and sleep

on the floor of his little room at night. O Alan San was the one juvenile member of our small family, a fair-haired boy of five, Yano's sole defender and admirer.

Some weeks after our installation in this quaint Satsuma home, I was strolling about the spacious grounds, with Alan and Yano at my heels, when I discovered in a neglected corner a small and ancient shrine. It was of gray stone, lichen-covered, and about three feet high. Its scooped and pointed roof surmounted a hollow cube of stone, with crescent-shaped windows at each end, and two deeply-chiselled Chinese letters on the face. It seemed to me too grotesque and ornamental to be left in so remote a spot, so I called Inosky, the gardener, and by dint of pigeon-English and many gestures, made him understand that I wished it taken to the front garden. I gave it a quick little push to see if it was movable, when Yano fell on his knees before me, clutching upward at my sleeve to draw my hand away. His round little face was green with terror.

"Okasan! Okasan!" he cried in a sort of hoarse whisper. "Kami Sama! *Koroshimasho!*" He struck himself on the forehead and threw back his head, with closed eyes, to simulate death.

I turned, in bewilderment, toward Inosky. He, too, was pale and agitated. He pointed to the shrine, then to the front garden, and, shaking his head, said earnestly, "Shoshi mo dekimasen," which, being literally interpreted, means, "I cannot do it, even a little."

That evening I learned from an interpreter the cause of their horror.

I had, unwittingly, been guilty of one of the most deadly sins, that of violating a shrine. The peasants of Japan implicitly believe that this offence is punished by instant death; hence the terror of the servants.

Each spring, brook or river which flows in that land of poetry has its deity, and must possess at least one shrine, and the one which I had discovered was placed there hundreds of years before in honor of a little spring which crept down the mountain behind our home. Until we came, it had trickled contentedly among the

ferns and camphor-roots, but now it was led, in underground bamboo pipes, to a broad, shallow well in the rear of the kitchen. This situation, in itself, must have been harrowing to the feelings of a water-god, so I decided not to cast further indignity upon him by making a toy of his little temple, and soon forgot all about the affair.

It was months and months after this that I began to notice a change in Yano. He no longer startled me with sudden outbursts of unmelodious song; he moved more slowly about his endless tasks, and his bright eyes were fast losing their sparkle. He neglected nothing, but he seemed to have lost all the young joy of living, which had first attracted me in him. Even the delightful task of catching for O Alan San the big yellow mountain-spiders, which are a favorite plaything with Japanese children, had lost its joy, and in his daily rôle of highway robber in the bamboo hedge, I noticed that the little American hero, masquerading under some ponderous Japanese title, overthrew him much more readily than of yore.

One afternoon he came to me with a shy, half-frightened look on his childish face, and besought the loan of eight sen (cents). This was something unprecedented. Hitherto his large salary of 76 sen a month had been ample for his humble needs, and curiosity prompted me to ask what he intended doing with it.

"It is for 'kusuri,'" he said timidly. "I am feeling 'taihen byoki' (very sick)."

I gave him the change and told him that he could go home for the rest of the day, at which he prostrated himself three times in token of gratitude.

A few moments later, Alan San stood alone in the big front gate, mournfully watching his playfellow down the narrow street.

Yano did not return next day, but a clumsy, large-headed youth appeared to take his place and inform us that Yano San was dangerously ill.

I did not dream that we should miss the child so much. Alan was inconsolable, the cook cross, the housemaid hurried all the time, and in fact, there was

no member of the household who did not mourn, openly or in secret, for the merry, willing little drudge.

It was a week before he returned. His eyes were heavy and sunken, as though with excessive weeping, and his cheeks were pale and flat. As he wearily entered the gate, Alan caught sight of him, and rushed out with endearments and exclamations which brought, for a moment, the old light to his eyes. They came into my room hand in hand, and I inquired with sincere interest concerning the sickness through which he had passed.

At first he was much abashed, and uncertain whether to speak or not, but Alan's little arms were around him, and my sympathy was obvious in every tone and gesture. So at last he told us his story. Long before he had been forced to give up, he had been to the "Isha Saan" (doctor), he said, and had spent all of his money in buying medicine, but, in spite of this, he grew worse and worse. At night he could not sleep for fevers and ague, and in the day-time he could not eat, not even rice.

Then his mother went to a priest for advice, and the pious man at once declared that it was no ordinary sickness, but the anger of some god. So he went with her to the temple, and there the priest, after feeling his heart and head, and sprinkling him with holy water, had declared that he was cursed by a water-god.

Yano turned almost green at the mention of that dreadful edict.

"But how did you offend the water-god?" I asked.

Yano hung his head and fingered his long sleeves nervously as he answered that he and O Alan San had thrown stones and dirt in the well after the frogs, and had defiled the pure water. Therefore the god was very, very angry. He did not curse the Christian child, for it is more difficult to gain power over Christians, so a double share of pain was sent the faithful little servitor. I did not dare to express my opinion of the conduct of the water-god, so I simply asked him what the priest did to remove the curse.

The child raised his head with a look of quick terror, and said in an agitated voice that he couldn't tell the

foreign "okasan" all that was done—the priest had forbidden it; but that he had suffered a great deal while the evil spirit was being driven out, and at times had run around like a mad dog, yelping and crying for mercy. The priest had imposed a fine of twenty sen upon him, and commanded him to make an offering at the little shrine, at sunrise and sunset, for seven days.

Looking in that poor little pinched face, I felt a secret but intense desire to see the Kami Sama, the shrine, the old priest and the frogs all in the bottom of the well together, but I did not say so, principally because my limited knowledge of the language rendered it impossible. One gets to understand the language much sooner than to speak it readily.

Late that afternoon, as the wild primroses softly awoke, and the hoarse crows sought their homes on the hill, I saw two little figures walking slowly along the weed-grown garden-path toward the shrine. I followed, unseen, and at a respectful distance. Yano carried a small cup of smoking tea, and a tiny, lacquered bowl filled with rice, while Alan held reverently a stick of incense and a Japanese writing-box of the cheapest kind. The shrine loomed through the dusky shadows, ancient and squat, and before it the children knelt. The small cup was placed upon the ledge, with the rice-bowl beside it, and then the stick of incense was carefully arranged in a tiny bamboo vase, just below the carven letter. I could see, from their gestures, that Alan was entreating the privilege of lighting it. This rite was performed in awed silence, Alan striking the match while Yano curved his thin brown hands about the wind-tossed flame; then Yano opened the writing-box, and, dipping his brush into the thick ink, traced on a slip of paper a few straggling words—a prayer. This he tied to the end of a cherry switch, and stuck in the ground before the shrine. The faint fragrance of the tea rose and mingled with the slow-curling incense. The little prayer rippled softly in the gentle evening wind, and Yano surveyed it all with grave satisfaction before he drew a long breath and bowed his head for the invocation. Clapping his hands three times to call

the attention of the deity, he laid his forehead upon the earth and began a long falsetto drone of sorrow and repentance.

Alan San watched him with wide blue eyes. He had never seen this game before—and Yano was not even laughing; he seemed to be in trouble, which his little friend could not share. For a moment his childish mouth quivered, and he made a faint motion as though to rise, but Yano was still singing that strange song, rocking himself to its droning cadences, and—whatever Yano did must be right. So the little Christian hands were clapped, and the golden head bowed in perfect mimicry, while the thick curls fell over, crowding against Yano's jetty locks and the lichen-covered stone. Yano, with no interruption to his slow swaying or his song, threw one arm about his little friend, who nestled to him, comforted.

Of course, Yano soon became perfectly well (possibly some medicine which I took the responsibility of administering to him may have hastened the operation of the priest's prescription,—and it is needless to say that his reverence for the water-god was stronger than ever.

Those who are familiar with the beauties of Spanish literature count as one of its greatest ornaments the works of Gustavo A. Becquer. This account of the miraculous origin of a remarkable musical composition was written by him, and has been translated for ROMANCE by Mary A. Springer.

THE MISERERE.

SOME time ago, while I was visiting the celebrated abbey of Fitero, I entered the library and, on looking over the books, found two or three old music-books covered with dust, while some of the leaves had been nibbled by mice. One was a *Miserere*.

I do not know much about music, but I am very fond of it, so much so that I often while away the time turning over the leaves of some opera score, gazing at the compact groups of notes, the lines, the semicircles, the triangles, and all the rest, although I do not know one note from another.

According to my usual habit, I turned over the leaves, and what first attracted my attention was that, although the Latin word *finis* was written on the last page, the truth was that the Miserere was not finished, for the music only went as far as the tenth verse. That was what most struck me at first, but as I looked at the score more closely, I noticed that, instead of the Italian terms, such as *maestoso*, *allegro*, *ritardando*, *piu vivo*, *á piacere*, there were several lines written in small German text which served to express most difficult feats, as the following: "The bones break, and the howling must appear to proceed from their very marrow"; or this, "The chord must howl without producing a discord; the keys give out a thundering sound, without deafening the hearer; let the sound be loud, but not become obscured, and let it represent suffering humanity sobbing and groaning." The most singular expression was the following, inscribed at the end of the last verse: "The notes are bones covered with flesh; an inextinguishable

light, the heavens and their celestial harmony; force, force, and sweetness. Use a stronger touch."

"Do you know what that is?" I asked of an old man who stood beside me, as I finished reading these verses, which seemed to me to have been written by a madman. He then related to me the following legend:

Some years ago, on a dark, tempestuous night, a pilgrim knocked at the door of the abbey. He requested permission to dry his clothes by the fire, and begged a piece of bread to satisfy his hunger, and shelter for the night. One of the brothers placed a frugal repast before him, and gave up his humble couch to the wayfarer. After he had rested, the monk questioned him about the object of his pilgrimage, and the way he was going.

"I am a musician," replied the pilgrim. "I was born at a great distance from this place, and I enjoyed great renown at one time in my own country. In my youth I made an unworthy use of art, and thus gave rise to base passions which led me to commit a crime. So in my old age I wish to do good with my musical faculty, and redeem myself by the same means which led me astray."

As the pilgrim's ambiguous words did not appear very clear to the lay brother, whose curiosity was awakened, the unknown, in answer to his inquiries, went on as follows:

"I wept over the sin I had committed, but as I endeavored to pray to God for mercy, I could not find fitting words to express my repentance, until one day my eyes chanced to alight on a holy book. I opened it, and on one of its pages I found a heartrending cry of true contrition, one of David's psalms, which began by saying: '*Miserere mei, Domine.*' From the moment I read those verses, my one absorbing thought and purpose was to find some musical accompaniment, magnificent and sublime, for the grand old psalm of the king and prophet. I have not found it yet; but if I can only succeed in expressing what I feel in my heart, what vaguely seems to float through my brain, I am sure that I shall compose a marvellous Miserere, the like of which has never been heard before; and so heart-

rending that, as the archangels hear the first chords, they will be moved to tears. They will pray to the Lord to have mercy upon me, and the Lord will pardon this unhappy sinner."

As the pilgrim reached this part of his story, he remained silent for a moment, and after heaving a sigh, went on with his story, while the lay brother, several attendants, and two or three shepherds from the farm belonging to the friars, gathered around the hearth, listening attentively.

"After wandering all through Germany and Italy, the classic country of religious music, I have not yet heard a Miserere to inspire me, not a single one, though I might say that I have heard them all."

"All?" said one of the shepherds interrupting him; "I'll bet you have not heard the Miserere of the mountain."

"What Miserere is that?" exclaimed the musician with an air of astonishment.

"I am sure you have not," repeated the peasant, and then he went on to say, in a hushed tone of voice, that that Miserere was only occasionally heard by those who, like himself, passed day and night guarding their flocks in the mountains or plains, and that it was an old story, but it was true, although it seemed incredible.

"It seems that in the roughest part of the range of mountains which arise above the valley where the abbey is now situated, some years ago, or many centuries, I should say, there was a famous monastery which a noble lord had built with the money which he had intended to leave his son, whom he had disinherited in punishment for his wickedness. However, his son was as bad as the Evil One, if he were not Satan himself, and when he learned that his property had passed into the possession of the monks, and that his ancestral manor had been turned into a church, he gathered together all the marauders he could find, his vicious companions ever since the time he had left his father's house. And one night on Holy Thursday, when the monks were about to sing the Miserere, this lawless band set fire to the convent, sacked the church, and killed all the friars.

After this wicked act, they went off, and their leader with them, and nobody knows where they went, though perhaps it was to the infernal regions. The convent was burned to the ground, but the ruins of the church are still visible on the rock, from which springs the cascade which, leaping from rock to rock, forms a stream that flows below the walls of the abbey."

"Well," interrupted the musician, "what has that to do with the Miserere?"

"Wait a moment," impatiently exclaimed the shepherd," and you'll hear at the proper time. The people around there were shocked at this crime, which was told in horrified tones at the firesides by grandfathers to their grandchildren, and so on; but what keeps up the recollection most vividly is that every year, on some night like the one on which it happened, lights are seen gleaming through the broken windows of the church and strange and mournful music is heard. It is the monks, who doubtless died before they were prepared to present themselves at the Judgment Seat, free of all sin; so they now emerge from Purgatory to beg for mercy by singing the Miserere."

His listeners looked at one another incredulously, while the pilgrim anxiously inquired:

"And you say that strange sight is still to be seen?"

"It will doubtless commence within three hours from now, for to-day is Holy Thursday, and the abbey clock has just struck eight."

"How far off is the monastery?"

"About a league-and-a-half. But what are you going to do? Where are you going on such a night as this? You must be bereft of your senses!" they all cried as the pilgrim arose from his seat and, taking his staff, went toward the door.

"Where am I going? I am going to hear that marvellous music, to hear the grand, the true Miserere, the Miserere of those who come back to the world from the grave, and know what it is to die steeped in sin."

As he spoke, he disappeared from the view of the frightened lay brother and the no less frightened shepherds.

The wind howled and shook the casements and doors as though a powerful hand was attempting to force them open; the rain fell in torrents, dashing against the window-panes, and from time to time a flash of lightning illumined the horizon.

After they had recovered from their astonishment, the lay brother exclaimed:

"He must be crazy!"

"Yes, he must be crazy!" repeated the shepherds, and stirring the fire, they gathered around the hearth.

After walking along the banks of the river for two or three hours, the mysterious being reached the place where the black, gloomy ruins of the monastery were situated. It had ceased raining, and the sky was covered with heavy clouds, while a dubious, pale gleam occasionally broke forth from a rift in the clouds. The wind beat against the heavy buttresses with a mournful wailing. However, nothing strange or supernatural occurred, and all these strange sounds were familiar to one who had often slept under the shelter of the ruins of a tower, and who had undergone all sorts of hardships during his weary pilgrimage. The raindrops dripped through the fissures in the broken arches, and fell on the pavement in a measure like that of the pendulum of a clock.

The owls hooted from their shelter under the nimbus of some stone image, still standing in a niche in the wall; reptiles crawled out of their nooks, disturbed by the tempest, and thrust out their hideous heads, or dragged themselves over the bushes and wild plants growing at the foot of the altar, or springing out of the crevices between the tombstones which formed the pavement of the church. All the mysterious and singular sounds usually heard in the country amidst the stillness of night reached the pilgrim's ear, as he sat on a broken-down tombstone and waited anxiously for the hour in which the marvellous sight was to be seen. But time passed on, and he did not see anything, though he still heard all those uncanny sounds.

"I wonder if he has deceived me," thought the musician, but just at that moment he heard a new noise, a sound inexplicable in that place. It was like the

rustling of a clock before striking the hour, a sound of rolling wheels, of dilating chords, of machinery put in motion, and about to display its activity, and the clock struck one, two, three, until it gave out eleven strokes, whereas there was no clock, nor bell, nor even tower there among the ruins.

The sound had not yet died away, when suddenly the stone canopies, the altars, the buttressed windows, the carved work over the choir, the festoons of clover over the cornices, the pavements, the arches, the whole church, were lighted up, though not a torchlight, taper, nor lamp of any kind was visible from which that radiance might have emanated. The radiance resembled the bluish, smoking, phosphorescent flame gleaming forth from the ghastly bones of a skeleton, causing the beholder to shrink back with horror. Stones joined stones, the altar, which had been lying on the ground, rose erect as though newly built, while at the same time the demolished chapels, the broken pillars, the ruins of the long line of arches, which crossed one another and, intermingling, formed a labyrinth of porphyry, sprang into shape again.

After the temple was rebuilt, a distant harmony was heard, which might have been taken for the rustling breeze, but which was the sound of a number of far-off, low, deep voices, which appeared to spring from the bosom of the earth, and gradually grow louder and louder.

The intrepid pilgrim began to be alarmed, though his strong love of the marvellous struggled against his fear. Carried away by his enthusiasm, he arose at last and leaned over the abyss where the torrent dashed over the rocks, rushing along with arrowy speed and a fearful roaring. As he did so, his hair stood on end with horror.

He saw the skeletons, the fleshless forms of the monks, wrapped in their tattered gowns, their hoods drawn over their skulls, displaying their grinning jaws, their glistening teeth, and their sightless sockets,—the very monks who had been thrown from the battlements of the convent into that yawning gulf emerged from its

depths, and, clinging with their bony hands to the fissures in the cliff, climbed up until they reached the top, murmuring in low, sepulchral tones, in heart-rending accents, the first verse of the Psalm of David:

"*Miserere mei, Domine, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.*"

When the monks reached the peristyle of the church, they formed in two lines on either side, and entering the portal, knelt down in the choir, where they intoned the psalm more audibly in solemn accents.

An accompaniment of musical sounds was heard as they sang, made up of the distant muttering of thunder as it died away after the storm; the wailing of the wind in the mountain fastnesses; the monotonous murmur of the waterfall as it dashed over the rocks, and the water dripping on the pavement, the hooting of owls, and the rustling of the reptiles among the leaves. All these caused a melodious strain, while something more was heard, which was inexplicable and indescribable; something which sounded like the echo of an organ accompanying the verses of the grand old song of lamentation of the Psalmist, with notes and chords as sublime as its terrible words.

The ceremonial went on, while the musician, absorbed and terrified, seemed to find himself in another world, to live in the fantastic region of dreamland. A terrible shock aroused him from the stupor into which he had fallen, and which seemed to hold him spellbound. His nerves were thrilled with a sudden emotion, his teeth chattered, and he shook all over, while he felt chilled to the very marrow as the monks uttered those terrible words of the Miserere:

"*In iniquitatibus conceptus sum; et in peccatis concepit me mater mea.*"

As the verses resounded through the air, and the echoes repeated them from arch to arch, a terrible outcry arose, which seemed like a lamentation drawn from mankind by the consciousness of their wickedness; a horrible cry, made up of all the lamentation of the unhappy souls, of the howling of despair, of blasphemous outbreaks of impious beings, forming a monstrous con-

cert, as the faithful interpretation of those who live in sin and were conceived in iniquity.

The singing continued, now mournful and low, now like a ray of sunlight breaking through the clouds after a storm, while to a flash of horror succeeded a joyous ray, until, under a sudden transformation, the church was enveloped in celestial light, the monks' skeleton forms were arrayed in flesh, and a luminous halo shone around their brows. The dome was opened and the heavens were seen through the opening, like an ocean of light unfolded to the gaze of just men.

Seraphim, archangels, angels and the angelic hosts then joined in with a hymn of praise as the following verse was sung, which ascended to the Throne of the Almighty like a harmonious throb, like a gigantic and sonorous cloud of incense:

"*Auditu meo dabis gaudium et lætitiam, et exaltabunt ossa humiliata.*"

At this moment a dazzling radiance blinded the pilgrim, his temples throbbed painfully, he felt a buzzing in his ears, and he fell fainting on the ground, and heard no more.

On the following day, the peaceful monks at the Abbey of Fitero, whom the lay brother had informed of the strange visitor they had had the night before, saw the unknown pilgrim enter the convent, wild-eyed and pale.

"Did you finally hear the Miserere?" asked the lay brother somewhat sarcastically, giving a meaning look at his superiors.

"Yes," replied the musician.

"And what did you think of it?"

"I am going to write it down. Allow me to stay under your roof," he said, addressing the abbot, "give me shelter and food for several months, and I shall leave you an immortal work of art, a Miserere which shall wash away my sins in the sight of the Lord, and shall immortalize my name, as well as that of this abbey."

The monks, from curiosity, requested the abbot to yield to the stranger's wishes; which he was the more

ready to do, since he was moved by compassion, believing the pilgrim to be insane.

As soon as he was installed in the convent he went to work. Night and day he labored ceaselessly, and he would sometimes stop in the midst of his task, as though listening to distant sounds, while his eyes would dilate, and jumping up he would exclaim: "That is it! There is no doubt about it!" And then he would go on writing with feverish rapidity, which caused the monks who were watching him to marvel greatly. He wrote the first verses, until he had reached the middle of the Psalm, but when he reached the last one which he had heard on the mountain, he was unable to go on. He wrote one, two, a hundred and even two hundred rough drafts, but all in vain. His music did not resemble the music he had already written down. Sleep abandoned him, he lost his appetite, and his brain became heated, until finally he became a raving lunatic and died without being able to finish the Miserere, which the monks have preserved as a strange legacy since his death. It can yet be seen in the archives at the abbey.

When the old man finished telling me this story, I could not help glancing at the musty manuscript of the Miserere again, which was lying open on the table.

"*In peccatis concepit me mater mea.*"

These were the words written on the page before me, and which seemed to mock me with their notes, their keys, and their mysterious hieroglyphics.

I would have given the world to have been able to read them. Who knows but that this was a masterwork, instead of the vagary of a madman?

There is a touch of pathos and more than a touch of humor in this toll-gate story, written for ROMANCE by S. Elgar Benet.

POOR FANCY'S FOLLOWERS.

FROM the tollgate on the hill there was a long, clear view north and south. On either hand the road narrowed to dim perspectives, running like a broad ribbon past the village with its dozen houses, and the low building which had once been a tavern and still evidenced its original purpose, although converted into a dairy.

The sky was clear and blue; the atmosphere below the freezing point; several feet of snow lay over the earth. At three o'clock of a midwinter afternoon, its glittering surface began to take on a pink tinge from the western sun, and shadows cast by the long lines of stone wall showed bluely upon the white.

A small house, like the orthodox snowy structure on a Christmas card, stood close to the road. It was so low that one questioned the reality of an apparent second story. Bare mock-orange bushes reached to the upper row of windows; the eaves looked scarcely higher than the fence. A path had been shovelled through the snow from the gate to the smooth surface of the pike. The gray roof of the toll-gate and the boughs of a walnut tree above it were black against the cold sky.

The "front room" was closed, its green shutters barred; it was always so, except at stated intervals, when certain village dignitaries were invited to take tea with Miss Thomasine. The room in which the toll-mistress sat with the neighbor from across the way was warm and bright; sweet, too, with the odor of many hyacinths coming into bloom before the south windows.

The chairs creaked as the women rocked leisurely and knitted with wonderful rapidity. Miss Thomasine's position commanded a view of the gate. She had taken toll for many years, almost since her father, the school-

master, died at his desk in the dark school-house down the lane and left her unprovided for. She would have filled his vacant place gladly and acceptably, but the minister's son, coming back from the city and an unsuccessful attempt at practising law, was considered to hold superior claims by reason of sex. Miss Thomasine, a stout young woman of nine-and-twenty, supported herself as well as circumstances permitted; sometimes she was hungry, but no one ever knew it. When the old tollgate-keeper died, she surprised the community by applying for his position. The authorities examined the statutes, and found nothing therein forbidding the employment of a woman in this capacity. They commissioned Miss Thomasine provisionally, and suggested a reduction in wage, which was not asked later when her returns exceeded any previously made.

She found the life congenial; she was a person of largely developed social instinct, and she knew every traveller on the road from the Pennsylvania line to the city. She had a keen interest in her fellows' affairs, which a certain personal dignity saved from degenerating into vulgar gossip.

A jangling of bells interrupted the conversation.

A tall wagon, its body painted red and blue, its white canvas covering peaked at either end, halted in the gate. Four sleek mules, each bearing a row of bells, tossed their heads and pawed the snow. A hearty face, bound around with a red comforter, looked down and a pleasant voice shouted, "Toll!"

Miss Thomasine laid her knitting aside and went out.

Said Maria when she returned:

"I al'ays did like the old market-wagons; seems like they're so pretty. The covers is so white, an' the bodies so blue an' red, an' the bells sound so nice, set yo' all a-tinglin' inside."

Miss Thomasine dropped her money through a slit in a locked box.

"Yes, we don't see many now. The railroad's useful, but it's spoiled a heap o' good sights. It used to be twenty or thirty o' them wagons 'd come down at once—'The fleet,' they called 'em—an' stop over night at

the tavern above; they'd get there about sundown, an' leave before light in the mornin', so as to get rid o' their stuff and be back to Skeen's before nightfall again. It was a mighty pretty sight, an' the bells —hundreds—with red cockades stuck above 'em. The air was fairly alive; 'twas all yo' could do to keep yo' feet still, class-member or no. They'd trot down the hill as proud, with whips crackin' an' dogs barkin'. I missed them awful at first; it made me feel bad to see two or three come stragglin' along so lonely."

"I reckon old Mr. Blix is about the last."

"Yes; he says he always was opposed to railroadin' the country, an' he'll stick to it."

They fell to talking of old acquaintance and old times. Maria took a doughnut from the plate at her elbow and remarked:

"We don't see much o' Kitty Wells —or, as I *should* say, Mrs. Simeon Proddy—any more.

"There comes the omlybus," said Miss Thomasine inconsequently; "Jack Crow looks cold, an' only four passengers, Miss Brakes an' her sister, the Baptis' preacher—he won't go on the railroad, because it runs o' Sundays—an' a stranger."

The omnibus, gay as a circus-van, rolled away over the shining road. Its days were numbered; the railroad had signed its death-warrant.

"I saw Kitty's daughter last week. She passed here sleighin'; her ma sends her to boardin'-school, but she seemed very well-mannered, for all. Kitty never ought to 'a' fell out with you, after what you done for her. If it hadn't been for you, Kitty might 'a' been tailorin' yet."

"I do' know that I blame Kitty," said Miss Thomasine impartially, "an' I do' know that I blame myself. A body's got to speak up for herself sometimes, an'—here comes the very man 'at slipped through without payin' his toll last Saturday was six weeks; if you'll wait a bit, Maria, not one inch shall he go till he's paid the county his debts."

She went out and swung the gate into its fastenings. She was a relentless collector; the delinquent paid his dues and secured a right of way.

She looked up and down the road and came in.

"Nobody but a gate-keeper," she said, "knows, Maria, the mean-spirited men that go over this road; an' some women's just as bad. As I was sayin' about Kitty, when Simeon asked me to marry him, I give him his answer at once—no. I'd made up my mind three years before when he first began to come down from Skeen's o' evenin's, an' to bring apples an' buckwheat an' pa'tridges an' things. But at the same time I thought o' Kitty. She had a hard time to get along; tailorin' wasn't what it was, with everybody wearin' store-clothes an' only a few o' the old people to make for, so I said to Simeon, after I'd made him understand that I was in earnest—an' it took some talkin', Maria—that I knew of a girl 'at 'd make him a good wife. He didn't take kindly to Kitty at first, but when I told him how much she'd always admired his looks, he seemed to give the matter consideration. Kitty was mightily pleased. Every time Simeon'd bring a load o' stuff down, I'd have her up, so's he could see her home, an' I give 'em every chance, an' in the fall they got married. I felt glad for Kitty; I knew what it was to try to get along with circumstances contrairy (the Colonel's wagons, he pays by the month), an' Kitty said she'd never forget me. Simeon had a fine farm up beyond the valley an' money in bank; he was a good pervider; an' the railroad comin' through his place brought him more money. Her face lost that fretted, worried look. She 'peared young again, an' I will say it for Kitty—pretty."

"Mos' people thought Kitty was pretty when she was a girl."

"But after a while Kitty got to puttin' on airs. Simeon give her a carryall, an' she got to callin' him Mr. Proddy to me—to *me*, mind yo', Maria."

"'Pon my word," said Maria.

"I won't say but what it galled me a little to see Kitty settin' up so straight an' airish where I might 'a' set if I'd a mind to; an' I won't say what I might 'a' done if I'd had my time to come over again an' could have felt myself freed from 'Dolphus. Not that there

was ever any nonsense about me, but I always said if it took two to make an engagement, no less could break it. An' one day when Kitty set down—just where you're a-settin' now—an' fell to pityin' the condition o' poor, lonely, single women to my face, I asked her in plain terms what her condition'd 'a' been if I'd a taken Simeon when he asked me, instead o' handin' him over to her? An' I said at the same time, for I didn't want to be too personal, that many a wife would 'a' died unwed if some other woman hadn't first refused what she was glad to get. Kitty never was the same to me after that. I scarcely see her at all now; she goes to town on the train, an' Simeon too; but I'm glad Kitty's got a good husband."

"Yes," said Maria. She looked down the hill toward the village. A man came striding over the snow; he wore a short jacket buttoned tightly and a scarlet worsted scarf tied over his ears and wound around his neck.

"Isn't that Tad Herring?"

He passed under the window, and rapped upon the kitchen door. Some one opened and closed it; there was the sound of smothered voices from the step.

"If there don't go Tad Herring back again," said Maria presently, "an' he don't look one bit pleased, neither."

His bearing evidenced displeasure; he walked with his shoulders elevated and his hands thrust into his pockets. The shadows, longer and bluer, lay upon the snow as if they had been painted there. Between them glowed a transparent red and yellow. Lines of flame wavered upon the wall and disappeared as the sun sank behind the woods. Maria folded her knitting and fastened the needles in it.

"How yo' hyacint's do grow!" she said,—"an' all white!"

"Yes; they come in good for funerals. Jones, the florist, 'll give me five cents a stalk, an' there's two hundred. I've laid out to buy me a black dress—a good one."

Maria wrapped herself in a green shawl and tied a

white cloud over her head, bade her friend good-by, and went home.

Miss Thomasine lighted the lantern and hung it over the gate. She shut out the gleaming world, and went in to the warmth of the kitchen.

A stout girl was busy laying the cloth; she had dark hair and round red cheeks; her mouth was sullen, and her eyes looked as if she had been crying. Miss Thomasine had taken her from the poor-house when she was eight years old; she might need somebody later on, and would have her trained. As the child grew into a handsome girl, she began to feel a motherly pride in her and looked to her place among the village girls with jealous eyes.

"Supper's ready, Miss Thomasine," said Annie.

They ate in silence until Miss Thomasine asked abruptly:

"What did Tad Herring want?"

"He came to ask me to go sleighin' to Brown's Mills to-night."

"Goin'?"

"No'm."

"Why not? Sleighin's good."

"I do' want to."

She had been stirring her tea vigorously, but she pushed her cup away and burst into angry, resentful tears; her head fell upon her breast; she covered her face with her hand.

Miss Thomasine looked at her in puzzled surprise:

"What's wrong between you an' Tad? What's he done?"

"Nothin'."

"Then what makes yo' act towards him like yo' been doin' this last two months?"

"I just hate him—that's all."

"Yo' thought enough of him to promise to marry him in the fall."

"I've changed my mind," said Annie, and fell to crying again.

"Tad Herring's a good steady boy; he's good to his parents, he's good to his sisters, an' he'll be good to his

wife. Besides, he's got a right sharp piece o' ground his gran'father left him; an' the Herrings have always stood well. What is it yo' don't like about him?"

"I don't like anything about him." She wiped her eyes on her apron, and faced Miss Thomasine defiantly. "I don't even like to think about him. Nobody needn't tell me. I know he's more'n I've any right to expect. I know you took me out o' the poor-house, an' that I come from bad stock. Let him marry other girls!"

"You're sure the new clerk at Henson's,—Garner, or whatever his name is, ain't got something to do with it?"

Annie flushed, but she said no, nobody had but herself. She never intended to marry. She wanted to live along with Miss Thomasine all her life, and if she didn't want her, she would go to town and work. Until eight o'clock she sat by the kitchen window and looked out upon the snow; she saw the sleighs go past, and heard Tad Herring's voice singing above the rest; she listened to a lecture upon the responsibilities of a marriage engagement and went to bed.

Miss Thomasine spent the rest of the evening alone; she knitted and napped alternately. She replenished the fire for the night, and counted the stalks of blooming hyacinths which would be ready for the florist in a few days. She thought with satisfaction of the new gown their value represented, and decided as to its make and shape. The return of the sleighing-party called her to the gate.

The hanging lamp made a faint yellow light in the blue-black night. She stood in the bitter cold and peered into the darkness.

A sound of halting footsteps upon the crisp surface of the snow came through the stillness—a hacking cough and labored breathing.

She waited in intense expectation.

A bent figure stumbled painfully into the circle of light,—a man with a gray beard and thin hands clutching his breast. He raised his face and looked toward the warm, homely room.

Miss Thomasine stepped from the shadow and called his name:

"'Dolphus—I knew it was you. Come right in."

She fastened the gate with careful precision before she helped him across the porch into the chair by the fire. She took his coat and bade him put his feet upon the hearth. Then she went into the kitchen and brewed him a bowl of spicy drink, strong and hot. She sat by in silence while he drank, with difficulty at first, but gratefully as its pungent strength warmed his numbed body. He was ill; exhaustion and fever spoke in limb and feature.

In looking upon him, she looked rather upon the young ne'er-do-well of the village in whom the romance of her life was bound. She liked to say there had never been any nonsense about her so far as love was concerned—she didn't believe in it. As often as she came to the gate to take toll, she had looked for him, up and down the road, dusty in summer, wind-swept or shining white in winter. She remembered the spring morning he left the village, bound for the marvellous West in search of fortune; blue-birds darted through bare branches, and a sweet, moist wind blew. She leaned over the gate before the school-master's little house and saw him go away down the turnpike. Pools of water lay in its hollows, but a warm sun dried the flint stones which were used to repair the road-bed, and they shone clean and blue. He waved his hat and marched on with brave determination, and after thirty years returned—worsted.

He said he had come back to rest awhile; he felt weak and tired; the sight of the old home would do him good. He told her in a few words the story of his life, which held but one incident repeated innumerable times—failure.

He rose from his chair, and said he reckoned he'd better be getting along.

"Where to?" asked Miss Thomasine grimly.

"To John Herring's; we used to be pretty good friends."

"Was yo' ever better friends with anybody'n with me?"

"A pretty friend I been to you, Thomasine."

"Listen to what I'm goin' to say; yo're a sick man,

'Dolphus, an' yo're not goin' away from here till yo're better, not one step, so say no more about it. I'm a well-to-do woman, for I've got enough to eat an' enough to keep me warm an' somethin' to give to them that have less. Besides, I ain't forgot your kindness to father an' me when we were young. What do yo' want down in the village? Folks change, an' many of 'em is dead. John Herring's a good soul, just the same as ever, but he married his wife up in York an' she's mighty close-fisted. She's saved a heap by gettin' all she can an' givin' nothin' away, an' she owns it all, John dassent say his life's his own. Set yo'self down till I come back."

She went up to the spare chamber over the parlor and kindled a fire. Beyond a chance wayfarer who slept in the porch or shed, she never entertained a guest, but she liked the respectability of a guest-chamber; it was one of her rare weaknesses.

Before breakfast all the village knew that 'Dolphus Gallowy had come back and was ill with pneumonia at the toll-gate. Daily detachments of men and women made their way over the snowy hill and up-stairs to the guest-chamber in which the sick man lay.

Once Tad Herring came toward evening and rapped upon the kitchen door. He did not wait to be invited, but walked in and sat down at the end of the table.

Annie was cutting bread; she held the loaf in her arm, and cut thick slices which she laid upon a plate of willow ware. A yellow cat rubbed his shining sides against her skirts and begged for bread.

Said Tad Herring stiffly:

"I come to see if Miss Thomasine 'll want anybody to set up to-night."

"She said this mornin' her an' me 'd set up ourselves. You can ask her if yo' want to; maybe she's changed her mind."

Annie went to a safe and unlocked the door; the cat followed, crying; she put a shoulder of bacon upon the table and sharpened a long knife.

"I reckon yo' heard a'ready about the row they had down at Henson's?"

She paused with her knife half-way through the meat.

"What row?"

"Why, we was all settin' round the stove as usual, about ha' past three, ol' man Tom Hinnicks was tellin' a string o' yarns about 'Dolphus Gallowy, when the door opens an' in walks a lady an' two children. Garner he jumped behind the counter, but the next minute he looked like he wished he hadn't. An' that lady she inteduces herself to the whole crowd as Mrs. William Garner, an' says she's come to stay."

Annie opened the outer door and seized the broom.

"Scat—scat!" she cried to the cat.

Tad Herring resumed his story:

"An' him a-passin' hisself off for a single man—havin' a royal good time flyin' around with the girls. What do yo' think o' that?"

"'Deed, it ain't none o' my affairs," said Annie airily. "*I* don't care how many wives he's got."

"Ol' man Tom Hinnicks says he was a-braggin' yesterday mornin' 'at he could cut any feller out in the village if he'd a mind to."

She put the dish of meat upon a shelf, opened the door of the stove and thrust in a stick of wood. The light flamed out and cast grotesque shadows upon the walls; it showed the red blood that had leaped to her face.

"An' he's makin' his boasts 'at he's cut *me* out, dead sure; that yo' give me the mitten on his account."

"Did he say that?"

"'Deed he did, an' the boys are all sayin' they wonder how yo'll take his wife."

"I don't care," she said, but her face was red with mortification. "What 'd yo' tell 'em?"

"I told 'em they didn't know nothin' about it; 'at the mitten hadn't nothin' to do with it, an' if we'd had a fallin' out, that was our business."

"That was mighty considerin' of yo'."

"An' what's more, if yo' want to shet up the talkin' once for all, yo' can."

"How?"

"Go 'long with me to prayer-meetin' to-night."

Annie reflected; she was keenly alive to ridicule.

"I'm afeard Miss Thomasine'll need me."

"No, she won't; mother's comin' up to-night; I'm to come for her after meetin'. Will yo' go?"

"I'll see what Miss Thomasine says."

A few days later Maria tied a black scarf on the knob of the front-door; the toll-gate was in mourning.

'Dolphus Gallowy's wanderings were over. From the haven of Miss Thomasine's little home he entered upon the rest that remains for all wanderers.

It was her privilege to give him decent sepulture. His grave was made with his kindred in the churchyard down the lane, among whose mounds he and she had played as boy and girl; and later she set a proper white stone to mark his memory.

Miss Thomasine stood in the cold front room, and looked down upon the man's quiet face and folded hands. The atmosphere was heavy with the odor of hyacinths; they hid the lining of the coffin and rested in fragrant heaps upon the lid.

Annie put her head into the room.

"Miss Thomasine," she said, "Tad Herrin' says Mr. Jones has come for the hyacint's, an' he says he wants every stalk yo' can cut."

Miss Thomasine replied gravely:

"You tell Mr. Jones, Annie, I'm very sorry, but we're goin' to have a funeral of our own."

Left alone, she said under her breath:

"I never was sentimental, an' there never was any nonsense about *me*, but it did seem kind o' hard to let him go out of the house with never a flower nor nothin', an' hyacint's bloomin' in the next room; him always so fond o' flowers, too. I could n't, an' my old gown'll do another season, I reckon."

Mrs. Julia Schayer, whose English is among the purest now written, adapted from the German this touching and original story for the New York *Independent*.

AN UNSUNG HERO.

NIGHT on the ocean; a gentle breeze swelled the white sails of the *Sea-Gull* as she ploughed her way steadily southward over the restless bosom of the Atlantic. I lay stretched lazily upon a bale of sail-cloth, my eyes fixed far overhead upon the delicate tangle of ropes and yards etched against the starry sky.

The waves, parted by the good ship's prow, dashed in measured beats against her sides; from the rigging arose at intervals a deep musical murmur, as from the strings of a gigantic wind-harp.

Beautiful and revivifying, after the fierce glow of day, is the summer night on tropic seas, and I was enjoying it to the full. We were bound for Rio, and the voyage was two-thirds over.

I was thinking, as I lay there under the stars, of many things—of the home which I had left in search of health and distraction from painful thoughts, and perhaps in the hope of restoring my shattered confidence in human nature; for things had gone wrong with me, and I was indulging at the time in that sort of spurious cynicism which besets some men when life first presents itself stripped of shams and illusions.

All at once my revery was disturbed by the wail of a child from the cabin below; I knew the sound. Among the passengers was a young woman in widow's weeds, accompanied only by a boy of four or five years. Nothing was known of her beyond the self-evident facts that she was young and beautiful, and that by the advice of physicians she was taking the boy—her only child—on this voyage, in the hope of restoring his strength, wasted by a long illness. A forlorn hope, indeed. It was plain to the most indifferent eye that

the boy had been failing from the day we left New York, as it seemed, from sheer lack of vitality and consequent wasting of the tissues.

It was a sight to move the hardest heart—this fair young mother, worn to a shadow with long watching, her whole being absorbed by the passionate mother love that refused, in the very face of despair, to relinquish hope.

Urged on by sympathy for her sad and solitary state, I, like other passengers, had offered such services as suggested themselves; like the others, I had been gently, but firmly, repulsed. To no one would the mother for a moment delegate the charge that was sapping her own life.

Shrinking from notice and avoiding all other companionship, she brooded over the fragile being who was slipping surely and all too rapidly from her clinging grasp.

The cry came up from the cabin again and again, shattering my revery and filling me with uncomfortable forebodings. It was evident that the end was near, and, physician as I was, and cynic as I tried to believe myself, the thought of the young mother's despair disturbed and pained me.

With a selfish, yet perhaps natural prayer that the child might live at least until land was reached, I rose on my elbow and, by way of diverting my thoughts, addressed myself to the sailor who was on watch at that hour. He leaned against the foremast near me, a stalwart fellow, with handsome bronzed features, and a pair of blue eyes as frank and clear as a child's. By the light of the lantern swinging above his head, I saw that his face was overspread with a look of melancholy quite out of keeping with the rôle of jolly Jack Tar that belonged to him, and it was not the first time I had noticed this expression on honest Tom's countenance. It may have been that, coupled with other unusual characteristics, which from the first day had attracted me to the fellow; whatever it was, I had found pleasure in studying this sturdy type of man, and had enjoyed many a quiet chat with him during the long voyage,

without, however, having made any attempt to pluck out the heart of his mystery, if such existed.

"A fine night, Tom," I began by way of opening conversation.

"Ay, sir, a fine night!" answered Tom in his deep tones, saluting me respectfully.

"It isn't often that you make a better trip than this, is it, Tom?"

"Well, no, sir. But we ain't there yit," he answered significantly, giving himself the sailor's peculiar hitch.

"You are familiar with these waters, I presume?"

Tom gave himself another hitch and cleared his throat before answering.

"Wall, sir, tol'able familiar. This makes my eleventh trip from New York to Rio."

"Indeed!" I responded. "You must have a special liking for these parts."

"As to that," said Tom, slowly, "it's pretty much the same to me *where* I go, so 't I'm goin'. I'm restless an' oneasy on shore, sir; all sailors is that, but 'pears to me I'm a little more restless an' oneasy than most of 'em. Mebbe," he went on, his gruff voice softening a little—"mebbe it's along o' my not havin' any folks on shore belongin' to me. The ship is all the home I've had this many a year, sir. There was a time when it might a-been different, if so be——" At that moment some one hastily ascended the stair leading from the cabin, and called my name. "It's the doctor, sir; Dr. Claas," said Tom, touching his cap, and turning away.

Dr. Claas, the ship's physician, hurriedly approached the place where I was lying.

"Pardon me, sir," he said extending his hand as I arose to meet him, and giving mine a hearty pressure, "but I believe you are a practising physician?"

As the doctor, a singularly grave and reticent man, had until now shown no desire to extend our acquaintance, I was unprepared for the cordiality of his greeting, but I answered at once in the affirmative.

"Then you are the only medical man besides myself on board, and I beg of you to consult with me in a most

interesting case. I am not mistaken—you will do me this favor?"

As a young and comparatively inexperienced practitioner, I could not but feel flattered by the doctor's manner, and answered without hesitation:

"Certainly, with the greatest pleasure."

"Then come, I beg," he earnestly said. "There is no time to lose."

As I passed Tom to follow Dr. Claas, I noticed that he was leaning forward, as if listening to what we had been saying, and I fancied that I heard him mutter some indistinct words as he resumed his position.

A moment later I stood with my colleague by the side of the sick child. He no longer moaned, but lay motionless, and almost pulseless, upon his pillow. The mother sat by him, her dark hair falling loosely, her small hands lying listlessly in her lap, her face pale and tense with unutterable grief and pain. Physician though I was, and already inured to the sight of human suffering, I could not meet the look that was turned upon us as we entered. On examination of the little sufferer I agreed perfectly with Dr. Claas in his diagnosis of the case; the child, though under the influence of no organic disease, was perishing from inanition. His life's small taper was flickering faintly; in a few days at most it would go out in darkness unless—a sudden thought flashed across my mind, sending the blood bounding through my veins. I looked quickly up into my colleague's face and met his eyes full upon me; a glance of quick intelligence passed from one to the other, and at the same instant one and the same word passed our lips. That word was—transfusion! The thought had been simultaneous. To restore the child's almost extinguished vitality, the famishing frame, deprived of nutriment by the incapacity of the organs of digestion and assimilation to do their work, must be supplied with fresh life-material already prepared for assimilation. In other words, the warm, ruddy stream of life must be led direct from the arteries of a living, healthy being into the child's own depleted veins.

Only a physician can comprehend the glow of enthu-

siastic joy that pervaded our whole beings as this theory, then comparatively new and untried, presented itself before us with all its glorious possiblities.

The grave face of Dr. Claas fairly shone for a moment, then darkened again, and he shook his head gravely.

"A magnificent opportunity! he said, in a tone of regret—"magnificent! But unfortunately impracticable. Being so near the end of our voyage we have not a living animal on board!"

A sharp cry interrupted my answer. In our professional zeal we had forgotten that the mother's ears were drinking in every word that was uttered. In an instant a slender arm bared to the elbow was extended toward us.

"I know what you mean," the little woman hurriedly said, her face flushing and paling again, "I have read much about it. I remember that it need not be an animal—a human being will do as well—even better!"

Even Dr. Caas was not proof against this. I saw his eyes grow moist as he took the extended hand gently in both his own. "It cannot be, madam," he said, as if speaking to a little child. "Compose yourself. We will retire and consider other means. Something may yet suggest itself."

It was very hard to convince her that not from her fragile, exhausted frame might flow the invigorating stream that should give new life to her dying child. But we left her at last, sitting in listless despair by the little couch, as before, and returned to the deck, where Dr. Claas joined me in a long discussion of the subject that had just been under consideration.

Tom, the sailor, was still on duty, pacing the deck at times, or leaning against the foremast, taking no apparent notice of our presence. At a late hour I bade Dr. Claas good-night, and retired to my berth, but not to sleep. The piteous face of that mother as we left her, having given the death-blow to her last hope, was constantly before me; her plaintive voice mingled with the monotonous plashing of the waves.

For what seemed hours I lay listening to every sound, longing for daylight, though it was not yet midnight,

but finally eight bells sounded, and steps and voices overhead showed that Tom was being relieved from duty.

A moment later there was a knock at the door of my room, and in response to my astonished "Come in," it was opened and Tom himself, looking very awkward and uncertain, stood on the threshold.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said, in a husky whisper, fingering his cap like a bashful boy—"beg pardon, but I made sure you wasn't asleep, an' there was somethin' I wanted to ask ye right away, sir, if I may make so bold."

So far from being angry with Tom for his intrusion, I was glad of any interruption to my painful thoughts, and bade him enter and close the door.

"And now what is it, Tom?" I said, when he had done so.

"I wouldn't have ye to think, sir, that I *meant* to listen to your conversation with the doctor," he began, after much preliminary shuffling and hitching and clearing of his voice, "but bein' where I was, some words come to my hearin', sir, an' after that I *couldn't* but lis'en, feelin' an int'rest in the little sick chap myself. An' from what I heard I gathered as how there was somethin' that 'ould save his life, sir, if it could be had; an' because it *couldn't* be had, sir, the poor little chap must die."

Tom made a little halt here and then continued:

"I—I couldn't rightly make out what it was as was wanted, bein' a seafarin' man an' knowin' little of things as ain't in my line, sir, but feelin' sorry for the poor little chap—an' his mother, sir—she seems to hev sot her heart on him to that extent—why, sir, I made so bold as to come an' ask ye what it was that's wanted, an' can't be had."

Tom's gruff voice trembled a good deal as he stumbled through his clumsy speech, and he shifted himself from one foot to the other a good many times.

It was impossible for me to feel either amusement or vexation at what might have seemed to some very like presumption. I did not hesitate to explain to Tom as

simply and as clearly as possible the theory of transfusion, the obstacles in the way of its application in the present case, and the regret of Dr. Claas and myself at the loss of so fine an opportunity.

Tom listened breathlessly, leaning forward, his eyes fixed upon me, his lips moving in unconscious imitation of my own. When I had finished, he straightened himself, putting one hand to his curly head with a perplexed air.

"Ay, ay!" he slowly said; "that was it! I wasn't sure as I got it right eend up, sir, but that was it! Ye see it has a powerful strange sound to a man like me; but jest let me once git my bearin's, sir, so't I don't run agin no sunken rocks nor sand-bars, an' I'm all right, sir. You say that the blood of a livin', breathin', healthy animal, beast or human, pumped, so to speak, into the veins of a sick an' ailin' creatur', beast or human, will save life, sir?"

"*May*, Tom; no man can say *will*."

"*May*, then," repeated Tom. "Wal, sir," and drawing himself up, he bared for my inspection one magnificent muscular arm, freshly tattooed with all a sailor's taste and ingenuity. "Wal, sir, here am I, eight-and-twenty year of age, tough as oak, an' though I say it as shouldn't, mebbe, as sober a man as ever trod deck, an' the little chap yonder is welcome to the last drop o' blood in my veins, so be it mought save him to the poor little woman that is breakin' her heart over him, as any man can see."

I sprang from my berth and seized Tom's hard brown hand.

"My brave fellow," I cried, "you will do this for the sake of a child who is nothing to you, and a woman you never saw before and never will see again?"

A strange smile came over Tom's face, and his eyes sought the floor.

"I will, sir," he answered, hoarsely; "for the sake of that same woman—as I shall never see again, mos' likely."

"But, Tom," I said, "it is my duty to tell you that there is a risk involved, a risk to yourself."

Again Tom smiled, giving himself a careless hitch or two.

"That's all right, sir. That's all right."

In an incredibly short time I stood again with Dr. Claas at the door of the state-room we had left a few hours before in so different a mood. It was opened by the child's mother, who had been prepared for our coming, and welcomed us with eagerness. Already reviving hope had given some brightness and color to her face.

"You have found some one who is willing to render this service?" she began, excitedly. "A sailor, you say? Oh, where is he? Let me see him and speak with him. I must thank him for his noble kindness——"

Meantime Tom had remained in shadow, but as she came forward looking eagerly about her, he stepped out into the light and stood awaiting her, cap in hand. She sprang toward him with extended hands. "Oh, you good, brave fellow, God bless you!" she began, fervently. "God must and will bless you for your kindness to a poor despairing mother——"

She stopped abruptly, as if suddenly turned to marble. The full light of the lamp fell over the sailor's athletic figure, and pale, agitated face. His eyes were fixed upon her with an inscrutable expression. For some time the two stood gazing at each other in silence, then with a loud cry the woman started forward, wavered, and would have fallen but for Tom, who seized her in his mighty arms and laid her on the nearest sofa.

For a moment he stood bending over her, his form perceptibly shaken, his face hidden; then at a summons from Dr. Claas, with whom the necessity for prompt action superseded all other emotions, he left the unconscious woman in charge of the stewardess, and followed us into the state-room.

A half-hour later the operation had been successfully accomplished.

We found the mother still lying on the sofa where we had left her, but at the sound of our steps she started up wildly expectant.

"Be calm, madam," said Dr. Claas, his very voice and mien expressing the satisfaction he felt; "all has passed off well. Your child is sleeping peacefully, and we have every reason to hope for the best."

"Thank God! Oh, thank God!" said the happy mother, with streaming eyes.

"But the man—the sailor—where is he? I must see him—there is something to be explained," she continued, in deeply agitated tones.

But Tom had slipped silently away and was not to be found.

"It is better so," said the doctor, returning to the saloon. "You have had enough excitement for to-night."

Then, after administering a sedative, we left the now hopeful woman to return to her child, while we sought such rest as the brief summer night might have yet in store for us.

In the course of the next morning, having made an early call with my colleague upon our little patient with the most gratifying results, I found myself on deck.

The sun had been beating down for some hours upon the great awning stretched overhead for the protection of the passengers, many of whom were sitting about trying to divert their minds from physical discomfort in various ways. The heat was simply terrific. Scarcely a breath of wind was stirring. The sails hung slack against the masts, and the sea was like glass.

A vivacious old French lady, to whom in a moment of weakness I had divulged the fact of my acquaintance with her mother-tongue, had inveigled me into a game of chess for which I was not at all in the mood; but from very lack of resistive power I yielded to her wishes, and tried to get up an interest in the game.

My partner had heard something of the remarkable events of the preceding night, and was burning with curiosity to know all the details. Tom, who, though no longer in sight, had been on duty as usual that morning, had been pointed out to her as the hero of the hour, and with the shrewdness of her race and sex in matters of sentiment, the old lady scented a romance.

I told her, in response to her persistent questioning, all that I considered proper, not mentioning the little scene between Tom and the young widow, which I confess had aroused my own curiosity to a lively degree.

"*Tiens!*" cried the old lady melodramatically (not forgetting a skillful maneuver with her bishop)—*tiens! C'est l'amour, Monsieur! C'est certainement l'amour!* There is always love at the bottom of these affairs. Either the handsome sailor has discovered an old flame in the pretty little widow, or he has fallen in love with her during the voyage! *Pourquoi pas?*" with a shrug and a smile that illumined her wrinkles like a ray from the past—"*pourquoi pas!* A sailor—is he not a man like other men? And this one—*ma foi!* He is a sailor such as one finds in books!"

And with remarkable presence of mind the old lady took possession of my castle.

I left her little romance undisturbed. Perhaps she was right. Who could tell?

For some time we continued the game. Never was chess so tiresome to me, never did I play so badly. What with my partner's incessant chatter, and the increasing heat, which seemed only to excite her tongue to greater activity, I grew more and more restless and *distrait.*

One by one the passengers on deck went below in search of coolness, one by one those below came up, for the same purpose.

The fair, false waves shone on in dazzling calm, the ship rocked gently, making no perceptible headway. The sultriness was becoming unendurable. A strange languor and depression pervaded the air. Suddenly the dull silence was broken by the sound of excited voices, which I recognized as those of the captain and Dr. Claas. The old lady pricked up her ears.

"If I mistake not," she said, "they are quarrelling over your *protégé*, the interesting sailor. Go and see. As for me, I have enough of this. I go below."

To my intense relief the venerable gossip prepared to depart, and rising, I began walking the deck, going a little nearer the excited speakers.

"For the last time, sir," the captain was saying in angry tones, "I repeat, that such conduct is entirely unbecoming, and against my wishes. Yesterday you led one of my men on to an act of romantic foolhardiness, and to-day, without consulting me, you send him below to his hammock to recover from the consequences of this eccentric and absurd experiment. Why, sir, you are exceeding your authority. You are encouraging insubordination. Once more, sir, it cannot be allowed!"

"Allow me to say, captain," said Dr. Claas, with great self-control, "that there was no leading on in the matter, whatever. As I call this gentleman to witness (turning toward me), the man having overheard us as we discussed the subject on deck, not dreaming that he would hear, or at least comprehend, what we were saying, came forward and offered himself for the experiment—an act which not one man in a hundred would be capable of, sir. Yes, sir; came of his own free will, and submitted to a painful and even dangerous operation to save a human life in no way connected with his own. And I say it is due to him that he should be protected from the consequences almost sure to ensue from any unusual strain upon his strength. To send him aloft to repair a broken yard under a sky like this, after such a loss of blood, would be simply brutal, sir."

The doctor's earnest speech had its effect upon the testy but kind-hearted officer, and after some further efforts on our united parts, the captain returned to the quarter-deck in a somewhat mollified mood.

At the suggestion of Dr. Claas I went below to look after Tom. The brave fellow lay stretched in his hammock in the close, small cabin, in a troubled sleep. The open collar of his blouse exposed to view a throat and chest of statuesque proportions; his curling brown hair was matted over his forehead; his face, haggard beneath its deep bronze hue, wore a look of gentleness and suffering.

The interest I had felt from the start in this fine specimen of Nature's nobleman had mounted to enthusiasm, and I was impatient to know more of the man and of his relations with the woman, seemingly so far

removed from his own sphere in life, upon whom his appearance had produced so startling an effect. But as I stood looking down upon him, noting his irregular respiration, and the contractions that from time to time passed over his features, I realized that even of a physique like Tom's too much might be demanded. The enervating climate, and, as I had every reason to suspect, some strong mental excitement, had diminished the man's power of endurance, and it was certain that Dr. Claas' solicitude was only too well-founded.

Not to disturb the sleeper, I would have withdrawn noiselessly, but at the moment Tom stirred, and opening his eyes, gazed at me, with a bewildered stare. His glance was uncertain, his lips trembled, as with fever.

"What time is it?" he asked, feebly. "Have I slept long?"

"It is twelve," I answered. "You have slept two hours, and can lie and rest as long as you feel like it. It is the captain's order. How are you feeling?" I added, seating myself on the blue-painted chest that doubtless contained the sailor's worldly possessions.

"Better, now," answered Tom; "but a while ago my legs would scarcely bear me, an' my head whirled 'round like a rusty capstan. It is powerful kind o' you, sir, to come an' ask after me. An' how is the little chap gettin' on?" he added, his voice softening suddenly.

"Very well indeed, Tom. I have just been with Dr. Claas to see him, and unless we are much mistaken, the tide has turned and the boy will recover. And if he does, Tom, it is to you he owes his life."

Words cannot picture the look that transfigured the sailor's sun-bronzed countenance—a look of deep and perfect content. He kept his eyes on the ceiling over his head for some time, his lips smiling like a child's.

"Good!" I heard him whisper. "That does me good to hear. The boy will live, an' she will be happy. Good!"

But after a while he turned to me again.

"Mebbe," he began, doubtfully—"mebby you mought a-guessed, from what you saw, that the little chap's mother an' me wasn't no strangers, sir; an' if ye don't

mind lis'enin', I'd like to tell ye how things is, an' was, sir; for I wouldn't have ye go to think harm of *her*, not knowin'."

I assured Tom that I was only too glad to listen to his story if it would not fatigue him too much in the telling.

"No, sir," he said; "it'll be a powerful relief to git it off my mind, along of her that mought be misjudged, if ye didn't know the true facts. No, sir; Nell—that's her—Nell an' me is no strangers. We was born an' brought up in a little village ye likely never heard of, away down on the coast o' Maine. Ay, different as things is now, our folks was neighbors, an' Nell an' me was playmates an' friends as long ago as I can remember, though her folks was better off than mine, an' Nell had a better chance at books an' the like. So when I grew up an' began to foller the sea, like my father an' gran'-father afore me, it come about quite natural that I should begin to look on Nell as my sweetheart, an' she on me. Every time I got home from a voyage I found her prettier an' sweeter, an' fonder of me; leastways I thought so then. She was a beauty in them days, sir, as ye can judge for yourself now, though she's changed powerful, poor girl! But in them times she led the fleet, sir. The city folks that come down to the coast o' summers took a deal o' notice of Nell—she was that proud an' sperrited, an' could hold her own with the best, her father bein' a retired cap'n as had made his pile, but warn't in no way stuck up, an' favored me, poor sailor though I was. Well, sir, they come a time when I started off on a three years' cruise. It was pretty tough, that was, but we was to be married when it was over, an' with that look ahead, sir, bein' young an' ambitious, the time passed pretty quick. It's a rough life, a sailor's, as every man knows, an' I'm free to own as I've been a bit wild in my time, sir, but as I'm a livin' man to-day, I was true to Nell all through that three years' cruise. Whenever we made port, instead o' foolin' away my money with the rest, I was hangin' round shops an' bazars, a-pickin' up pretty things for Nell—silk handkerchiefs, an' carved boxes an' fans, an' all kinds o' furrin' notions that women love. Nell

never got to see 'em, sir; they're stowed away in that there blue chest as you're a-settin' on this minute, for, as mebbe you've guessed by this time, when we made port I found Nell married an' gone—ay, sir, married to a fine gentleman from the city, an' gone to live amongst his kind of folks. Ay," he added, with a husky laugh, "if I'd got home a month sooner, I mought a-danced at her weddin'!"

"They are all alike, Tom," I said, as he paused, my cynicism reviving; "unworthy of a true man's love and trust."

Tom turned his clear blue eyes upon me wonderingly.

"Lord bless ye, sir," he said warmly, "ye ain't to lay no blame on to *her!* It's *me* as was a fool, for thinkin' myself good enough for a girl like Nell, that had been brought up so diff'rent, an' could hold her own with the best on 'em, along of her father bein' a retired captain. An' I forgot to mention that the old man was dead, or mebbe it moughtn't a-happened; though I do' know as it would have made any odds. No, sir, I never laid no blame on to *her*, though I own as it hit me hard an' sent me a-careerin' over the world like a ship that's lost rudder an' compass. It's goin' on seven year since it happened, sir, an' I'd begun to git in a way used to it though it sorter took me afresh when the ship was homeward bound an' I remembered as no one was a-waitin' an' a-watchin' for *me*, my folks bein' dead an' gone long ago—when there was she a-comin' on board this here ship, sir, a lone woman at her age—she's only twenty-six, sir—an' lookin' so peaked, an' a-holdin' on for dear life to that there little youngster as a stout breeze might blow away! An' now you know how it is; an' why I was willin' to do what I done; not for a strange woman (though I ain't sure as I wouldn't a-done the same), but for the little woman that was to a-been my wife; the little woman I ain't never forgot, an' never shall forget, though she never can be aught to a rough sailor like me."

"But she asked for you, Tom, this morning. She wishes to see you," I said.

Tom laid his bandaged arm across his face, but his

deepening color did not escape me, and I saw how the burly frame was shaken with sudden emotion.

"No, sir," he said huskily, after some moments. "No, sir, it's better not. Tell her I say it's better not. Tell her she's free an' welcome to all I done, an' if 'twas to do over again, she'd be free an' welcome to the last drop o' my heart's blood, so be the little chap was flourishin', an' she was happy. An' tell her," he continued softly, "if so be as she should say anything to you, about what's past an' gone, that I ain't never harbored nothin' agin her, first or last, an' wishes her well an' happy wherever she may be!"

There was silence in the little cabin—a silence like that of a church. My confidence in human worth was strengthened. This unlettered sailor was a man before whom Diogenes might well have extinguished his lantern, as I did mine. I was compelled to believe again in human love—a love so perfect that it becomes a religion. I pressed the sailor's horny palm in silent acknowledgment.

But what was this?

In my interest in Tom's narration I had not observed the gradual darkening of the cabin; but now all motion seemed suddenly and strangely suspended. The ship shuddered through all her timbers, as though held in the grasp of a Titanic hand that was about to crush her to powder; then a hollow, thunderous sound made itself heard; black masses of water foamed at the portholes, and the vessel was whirled madly to and fro and about, as in a whirlpool.

It needed not Tom's sudden excited cry to tell me the meaning of this. I knew intuitively that we were at the mercy of a hurricane.

At the first sound Tom had leaped from his hammock, and flung open the door. Above the roar of the elements could be heard a confusion of voices, a hurried rush of feet, then clear and distinct came the captain's voice shouting through his trumpet:

"*All hands on deck!*"

Instantly Tom sprang toward the stairs, turning only to say as I would have followed him:

"No passengers allowed on deck! Take care of yourself and keep cool, sir! The *Sea Gull* has outridden many a storm. Ay, ay, sir!" he shouted back, as the trumpet-call sounded again.

I tried to detain him, to speak some words of caution and protest. My voice was drowned by the storm, and Tom shook off my hand with a laugh. With one spring he mounted the stairs and lifted the hatchway. The storm dashed against his brave, smiling face; he shook the spray from his hair, waved his hand to me and vanished, letting the hatchway fall behind him. In vain I endeavored to raise it; in vain I beat upon it, and called Tom's name. My feeble efforts amounted to nothing, and in deep anxiety and dread I turned away.

Stumbling and pitching along the narrow, dark gangway, I managed to reach the passenger saloon. There panic reigned.

Women and children, with faces convulsed with terror, lay stretched upon the floor, clutching frantically at the thick carpet, or at any object within their grasp. Men staggered about aimlessly, crying, cursing, or praying in a frenzy of fear. Having first made my way to the state-room of our little patient, and with the aid of cushions and pillows made the position of mother and child as secure as possible, I turned my attention to the women and children in the saloon. There was very little that could be done, for every attempt at speech was drowned in the awful tumult, and exhaustion soon put an end to my efforts, and stretched me helpless in their midst.

The hours went by on leaden feet. The *Sea Gull* wrestled bravely with her mighty enemy—at times sinking upon her side until the topmast kissed the crest of the engulfing waves, then like the bird whose name she bore, mounting and hovering on their summit, only to plunge again into the yawning abyss of waters. Of what was passing outside and above us we knew nothing, being in darkness, except as the ship rose for an instant, vouchsafing brief glimpses of the furious sea, and hearing only the tumult of the elements, with now

and then a rush of feet, or the faint trumpet-call of the captain.

But I did not forget Tom. With a shudder I recalled that open vein so insecurely protected for such an emergency; with a thrill of sincere admiration I remembered his look of eager daring as he sprang into the storm to meet his duty, and, it might be, his death.

Toward sunset the hurricane seemed to have expended its power, and though the ship continued to pitch frightfully, the passengers dragged themselves to their respective state-rooms, myself among the rest; and against my own will, for I meant to seize the first possibility of reaching the deck, I sank from sheer exhaustion into a sleep which lasted until daybreak. As soon as I was conscious, I left my room and hastened on deck. The sea was still heavy, but of the fearful hurricane there remained only a fine stiff breeze that drove the ship bravely on toward her goal.

Almost the first person I saw was Dr. Claas, who was coming in search of me.

At sight of his face a sharp pang went through me.

"We are safe, yes," he said, seizing my hand; "but the storm had its victim."

"Tom!" I barely whispered.

"Yes, Tom!"

It seems that, at the very height of the storm, one of the sails became loose from its fastenings, and sweeping the deck, caused the ship to careen dangerously to leeward. The captain called for volunteers to climb the topmast and cut away the sail. It was a perilous undertaking in such a wind. Of all the crew only one man came forward. It was Tom. Firm and sure he made the ascent, and cut away the ropes; the sail flew swiftly off over the frothing sea, and the ship righted herself at once.

Hand over hand, swinging himself gallantly from yard to yard, the brave fellow descended; but when half-way down he was seen to miss his grasp, to clutch at the ropes, to fall heavily to the deck.

In his violent efforts, the bandage had been torn from his wrist, and Tom had fainted from loss of blood. It

being impossible to open the hatchways in such a sea, some attempt at a bandage was made, and the insensible sailor placed in as secure a position as was possible. But it was hours before Dr. Claas could reach him, and then only to find himself too late.

The sun was setting when, wrapped in the ship's flag, a tribute rendered to his heroic worth and splendid seamanship, the dead sailor was consigned to his unmarked grave.

No dead monarch, lying in kingly state, ever called forth deeper or sincerer reverence and regret than showed itself in the faces of those who stood with uncovered heads about the still form that had held so gallant and true a spirit.

In low tones the captain read the burial service; for a moment each head was bent in silent prayer; then, at a signal, there was a swift gliding of ropes, a plash, and the laughing waves closed above all that was mortal of the humble hero of this simple tale.

Not only fishermen and epicures, for whom André Theuriet must have primarily written this pretty story, will enjoy it; but also every one who loves the unstrained quality of mercy. The translation was done for ROMANCE by H. L. B. Porter.

THE TROUT.

"SCHOLASTIQUE!"

"Monsieur Sourdat."

"Take the utmost pains in cooking the trout,—short-boil, white wine, parsley, thyme, laurel, oil and onions in full strength."

"Are you not afraid to use all the herbs of St. John, Monsieur?"

"No,—and above all no vinegar,—just a sprinkling of lemon-juice. Let the cover be laid at half-past ten, and let the dinner be ready at eleven precisely,—not at five minutes past eleven. Do you hear?"

After having uttered these last injunctions to his cook, Judge Sourdat crossed the chief street of Marville with alert steps, and gained the Palais de Justice, which was situated back of the Sous-Préfecture. Judge Sourdat was about forty-five years of age; very active, notwithstanding a tendency to stoutness; square of shoulders; short in stature; with a squeaking voice and a round, close-shaven head; eyes gray, clear and hard under bushy eyebrows; a mouth closely shut, with thin and irritable lips; browned cheeks, surrounded with whiskers badly trimmed; in fact, one of those mastiff faces of which one says, "He can't be good every day." And surely he was not very kind, and he boasted of it. A despot, he used harshly all of his little realm in the Palais. Hard as stone toward the guilty, rough with the witnesses, aggressive with the advocates, he was a veritable furnace who fanned himself constantly into a glow. He was feared like the fire, and he was loved very little.

However, this man of iron had two vulnerable sides. Firstly, he responded to the pastoral name of Némorin,

which exposed him to ridicule, and, secondly, he was a gourmand, and gave points to Brillat Savarin. His gastronomy, which was profound, had become a mania.

Living in this little, narrow, sleepy city on the frontier of the Belgian Ardennes, where the pleasures of the table constituted the only diversion of the easy bourgmasters, the culinary accomplishments of the Judge were cited for ten leagues around. It was said that he ate only fish caught at break of day, because the repose of the night and the absence of emotion rendered the flesh more delicate at that time. It was he who imagined that to plunge shell-fish into boiling milk, before cooking them in their ordinary dressing, gave them a richness and a velvety savor particularly exquisite. On the day when he taught that latest refinement to the priest of St. Victor, the latter, who was always carried away by his appetite, could not help blushing; and raising his puffy hands to Heaven, he cried, "Too much! This is too much, Judge Sourdat! Assuredly it is permitted to taste with discretion the good things which Divine wisdom has provided, but such sensuality as this borders upon mortal sin, and you will have to render account for it to the good God."

II.

To the scruples of the excellent priest, the judge responded with a misanthropic laugh. It was one of his malign joys to expose his neighbors to temptation, and this very morning the priest was to breakfast with him, the recorder being the only other guest. Judge Sourdat had received, the evening before, a two-pound salmon trout, taken from the beautiful clear water of the rocky Semois. It was his favorite fish, and had fully occupied the first hours of his morning. He had demonstrated to cook the superiority of a quick-boil to the slow cooking in Geneva or Holland sauce of the books. The trout must be served cold, and in the seasoning in which it was cooked. This was with him a principle as well as a dogma, as indispensable as an article of the penal code. He continued to repeat it to himself even after having clothed himself in his robe and taken his seat, though

he was turning over the leaves of a document bearing upon an important case now pending.

This was a criminal affair, the dramatic details of which contrasted singularly with the epicurean speculations which persisted in haunting the cranium of Judge Sourdat.

The case was thus: During the previous week at sunrise, there had been found in a thicket of the forest the body of a game-keeper, who had evidently been assassinated, and then concealed among the brambles of a ditch. It was supposed that the crime had been committed by some strolling poacher, but up to the present time there had been elicited no precise evidence, and the witnesses examined had only made the mystery deeper. The murder had taken place near the frontier, where charcoal-burners were at work. The suspicions of the judge had therefore been directed toward them. The depositions thus far had revealed that on the night of the murder these people had been absent from their shanty, and the furnace had remained in the care of a young daughter of the charcoal-burner.

Nevertheless, Judge Sourdat had given the order to re-examine one of the men, a stolid boy of twenty, who had once had a falling-out with the murdered guard; and the judge had also cited the charcoal-burner's daughter to appear before him. Just here the affair commenced to be peculiar. The girl had not responded to the summons. She had evidently hidden, no one knew where. The Judge had been obliged to send a constable to look her up, and he was now awaiting the result of the search.

Toward ten o'clock the door of his cabinet opened, framing the cocked hat and yellow shoulder-belt of the constable.

"Eh! well?" grunted the Judge.

"Eh! well, Judge. I cannot find the girl. She has disappeared. The charcoal-burners pretend utter ignorance."

"Pure acting!" irritably cried Judge Sourdat. "These people are mocking you. You are but a stupid fellow at best. Go."

The judge consulted his watch. The business was at a standstill; the case could not be called: and he wished to give a glance of oversight to the matters of the dining-room before the arrival of his guests. He disrobed himself and hurried home.

III.

The pleasant dining-room, brightened by the June sunshine, presented a most attractive aspect with its white woodwork; its gray curtains; its high stove of blue faïence with its marble top; and its round table covered with a dazzling white linen cloth, upon which were placed three covers, artistically trimmed. The little rolls of white bread rested tenderly upon the bright red napkins. The rosy wine of Inon sparkled in the caraffes. Flanked on the right with a lettuce salad, ornamented with nasturtiums; on the left by a cluster of shell-fish from the Meuse, the trout was extended in a platter engirdled with parsley. Its silvery belly showed delicate red spots. Its blue back, cut transversely, revealed its rich salmon color, and it held a full-blown rose in its mouth. By its side, a bowl of court-bouillon was just taking a chill, and exhaling abroad a fine odor of thyme which rejoiced the nostrils.

This spectacle softened the ill-humor of the Judge, and he was calming, little by little, while laying upon the silver salver a dusty bottle of old Croton, when the hall door opened violently and he heard in the vestibule a girl's voice which cried, "I tell you I wish to speak to the Judge. He expects me."

At the same time a half-naked arm made the recorder Touchbœuf spin through the open door. He had just arrived, being one of the invited guests. A strange visitor was ushered by him into the dining-hall. It was a young girl, almost a child, thin and brown, with uncovered head and with her hair streaming on the wind. Her stockingless feet were thrust into men's boots; a gray blouse and a skirt of blue cotton formed her sole attire. Her rapid walking had flushed her cheeks; her gentle brown eyes were sparkling under the

uncombed tangles of her chestnut hair; her nostrils were dilating, and her parted lips trembled.

"What does all this racket mean?" growled the Judge scowling.

"It is that little charcoal-burner," responded the recorder, Touchbœuf. "She arrived at the *Palais* just after you left, and she has followed me as far as here, in a state of wild excitement, in order that you may take her deposition."

"Eh!" groaned the Judge. "You are in a great hurry, my girl, after keeping me waiting three days. Why did you not come sooner?"

"I had my reasons," she said, casting hungry eyes upon the table.

"We can better appreciate your reasons later," replied the Judge, furious at the interruption. "Meanwhile we can listen to your report."

He drew out his watch. It was a quarter to eleven. "Yes, we have time, Touchbœuf. You will find at your side all that is necessary for writing. We will question her."

The notary seated himself at the writing-table with his paper and inkstand, and his pen behind his ear, waiting. The Judge, sitting squarely in a cane-seated arm-chair, fixed his clear, hard eyes upon the girl, who remained standing near the stove.

"Your name?" he demanded.

"Méline Sacaël."

"Your age, and your residence?"

"Sixteen years. I live with my father, who burns charcoal at the clearing of Onze-Fontaines."

"You swear to tell all the truth?"

"I came only for that."

"Raise your right hand. You were near your home on the night when the guard Seurrot was murdered. Relate all that you know."

"This is what I know. Our folks had set out to go with the charcoal to Stenay. I watched near the furnace. Toward two o'clock, at a moment when the moon was hidden, Manchin, who is a wood-cutter of Iré, passed before our lodge. 'See me! Am I not watching at an

early hour?' I cried. 'How goes all at your home? All well?'

"'No,' he answered. 'The mother has a fever, and the children are almost dying with hunger. There is not a mouthful of bread in the house, and I am trying to kill a rabbit to sell in Marville.' That is on the other side of Onze-Fontaine. I lost sight of him then, but at daybreak I heard the report of a gun. The wind had freshened, and I was just clearing the ashes to shield the charcoal. Then, immediately after, two men came running toward our lodge. They were disputing. 'Scoundrel!' cried the guard, 'I arrest you.'

"'Seurrot,' cried the other, 'I pray you let me have the rabbit, for they are dying of hunger at my home.'

"'Go to the devil!' said the guard. Then they fell upon each other. I could hear their hard blows plainly. Suddenly the guard cried, 'Ah!' and then he fell heavily.

"I had hidden behind our lodge, terribly frightened, and Manchin ran away into the great forest and from that time to this he has not been seen. He is in Belgium, for sure. That is all."

"Hum!" growled the Judge. "Why did you not come to tell this as soon as you received the summons?"

"It was none of my business—and I did not wish to speak against Manchin."

"I see! but you seem to have changed your mind this morning. How is that?"

"It is because I have heard that they accused Guestin."

"And who is this Guestin?"

The girl reddened and answered, "He is our neighbor charcoal-burner, and he would not harm a fly. Do you not see," she continued, "that the thought of fastening on him the guilt of another aroused me. I put these great boots on, and I have run all the way through the woods to tell you this. Oh, how I have run! I did not feel tired. I would have run till to-morrow if it had been necessary, because it is as true as the blue heavens that our Guestin is entirely innocent, gentlemen."

She spoke with an animation which made her truly beautiful, in spite of her rags. Her rough eloquence had

the ring of sincerity, and the terrible Judge felt himself moved by the energy with which the child defended Guestin.

"Hallo!" cried he, seeing her suddenly grow pale and stagger. "What's the matter?"

"My head swims. I cannot see."

She changed color and her temples grew moist.

The Judge, alarmed, poured out a glass of wine, and cried, "Drink this quickly!" He was wholly absorbed and very much moved before this girl who was threatened with illness. He dared not call Scholastique, for fear of disturbing his cooking. He looked helplessly toward the clerk, who was gnawing his penholder.

"It is a swoon," observed the latter. "Perhaps she needs something to eat."

"Are you hungry?" demanded the judge.

She made a sign of assent.

"Excuse me," she said in a feeble voice, "but I have had nothing to eat since yesterday. It is that which makes me dizzy."

Judge Sourdat trembled for the first time in years, while his heart softened as in childhood. He thought of this young girl who had run three leagues in order to save her companion from the clutches of the law,—three leagues in a hot sun and fasting! The thought of the fast moved his sensibilities more strongly than could anything else. In his confusion he cast a despairing look at the table. The salad and the shell-fish seemed too good for any but such as he and his companions.

"The deuce!" he cried at last heroically. Violently he drew toward him the platter on which lay the trout. After separating a large piece which he put on a plate before her, he made the charcoal-burner sit down.

"Eat!" said he imperiously.

He had no need to repeat his command. She ate rapidly, voraciously. In another minute the plate was empty, and Judge Sourdat heroically filled it anew.

The scribe Touchbœuf rubbed his eyes. He no longer recognized the Judge. He admired, though not without a sentiment of regret, the robust appetite of

this charcoal-burner, who devoured the exquisite fish without any more ceremony than if it had been a smoked herring, and he murmured, "What a pity! Such a beautiful dish!"

IV.

At that moment the door opened; the third guest, the good priest of St. Vincent, in a new cassock, and with his three-cornered hat under his arm, entered the dining-room, and stopped questioningly before the strange spectacle of that little savage seated at the Judge's table.

"Too late, Monsieur le Curé!" growled the Judge. "There is no more trout."

At the same time he related the history of the little charcoal-burner. The curé heaved a sigh. He comprehended the grandeur of the sacrifice, but, half-mournful, half-smiling, he tapped upon the shoulder of the Judge.

"Judge Némorin Sourdat!" cried he, "you are better than you thought. In truth I tell you that all punishment for your sin of gluttony will be forever remitted because of that trout which we have not eaten."

The readers of our leading juvenile publications are well acquainted with the work of the veteran hunter and traveller, Mr. W. Thomson. It is with pleasure that we present to them—and the older ones will enjoy it, too—this exciting, true story of an African lion-hunt, prepared by Mr. Thomson especially for ROMANCE. It is the first in the group of Adventure Stories announced for this issue.

"BRAVEST WHITE MAN EVER WAS."

MANY years ago, when quite a young man, I was stationed at Kitope, a small town near the Tuwego river, a confluent of the Kucha, which last-named stream discharges its waters into the Indian Ocean 200 miles or so south of Zanzibar, on the east coast of Africa.

Employed in my office there was a fine young fellow of eighteen, Harold Beeton by name, who had come out with me from New York, and to whom I had become greatly attached.

Early in July, the least unpleasant month of the twelve in that part of the world, the youth, accompanied by Kola and Matu, two Wagindo natives, went up the Tuwego by boat on a three days' hunting expedition, but with no intention of straying into the forests or jungles, the river itself affording abundant sport in the way of water-fowl, crocodiles, and even occasional hippopotami, one of which creatures Harold had an especial ambition to shoot.

After the three days and two more had passed without bringing the boy, I became seriously alarmed for his safety, and determined to go after him.

Looking up two brothers, Tom and Joe Brackett, who, hailing originally from Florida, were old African colonists and experienced hunters, we went to the river, purchased a stout boat, stocked it with plentiful supplies, and, on the morning of the sixth day, started up stream in search of the belated men.

Using sails when the wind served, and at other times rowing, we made about twenty-five miles the first day,

and before sundown came to a sand-bar, where the dead body of a huge crocodile, shot through the head, a heap of ashes, the feathers of birds, and numerous other signs, showed that the hunters had, for a greater or less time, camped on the spot. We, too, decided to spend the night there.

Hauling our boat from the water, propping it, upside-down, on stakes, and surrounding it by a brush fence, we made a rude shelter, before which, by turns, we kept a bright fire constantly burning.

Frequently through the night we heard the roaring of near-at-hand lions and the yelping clamor of jackals—sounds which did not lessen our anxiety in regard to young Beeton and his companions.

Once, just as I came out to relieve Joe, I saw, in the edge of the forest, a little beyond the lighted circle, two luminous balls, fixed and motionless, to which I quietly called the men's attention.

"It's a lion, watching us," whispered Joe, "let's shoot together."

Raising our rifles and aiming straight between the fiery orbs, we pulled trigger simultaneously; but only its own echo answered the blended report, though the glaring eyes disappeared.

"Pshaw! we've both missed," I exclaimed.

"Not so sure of that," observed Tom Brackett, awakened by the noise. "We'll take a look anyhow."

I was starting impulsively forward, when Joe caught my arm and said: "Not for your life! Don't stir out of the light without a firebrand. There may be a dozen lions within fifty yards. I've known more than one man killed through such foolishness."

On this, we each snatched up a blazing branch and, with rifles held ready for instant use, stepped across to the spot where the eyes had been; and there, stone dead, in the thick underbrush, lay a great, black-maned lion! Both bullets had pierced his brain, and he had died as suddenly as if struck by lightning.

"Hark!" said Joe; "I thought so," as the rustling of the shrubbery proved that several other brutes of like kind were gliding away at our approach.

It took our united strength to drag the dead lion over to the protecting fire, where we speedily removed his hide—an unusually large one, measuring ten feet and seven inches from snout to tail-tip. Then, leaving Tom on guard, Joe and I crept back to bed.

Next morning at sunrise we resumed our journey up the river, which here flows from a southwesterly direction, with a scarcely perceptible current.

The events of the night before had given rise to gloomy forebodings, and, as we went along, not one of us cared to put into words the haunting fear which oppressed his heart. It seemed only too probable, we thought, that either the whole party had perished, or that the half-savage natures of the blacks had succumbed to the temptation offered by the valuable arms, gold watch and other equipments of the white youth, whom they had, perhaps, murdered and robbed—a thing they could easily do, as both carried old flintlock muskets.

True, the men, who spoke English well, were considered fairly honest fellows by the Kitope people, yet they might have seized so favorable an opportunity of acquiring what to them would appear great wealth.

I was thinking of these dire possibilities and inwardly reproaching myself for having allowed my young friend to go off, so attended, on such an expedition, when Joe Brackett suddenly exclaimed: "What's that?" pointing to something floating level with the surface a few hundreds of yards above us.

We were sailing slowly along at the moment, before a northeast zephyr, but now we put out oars and were quickly alongside the object, which proved to be the *Umgalla* (Harold's boat), with the whole of her stern broken away! There was nothing in the water-logged hull—neither arms, blankets nor provisions—not even an oar—all had been taken or washed out.

After a critical examination of the shell, one of my comrades said: "It's all plain enough; the fellows have tackled a hippo'—a lone bull likely, and that's worse than a rogue elephant; the brute's turned on them, and taken a mouthful out of the boat. What happened then I can't say."

"Do you think the men have lost their lives?" I asked.

"Well," slowly replied Tom, "if the boat was smashed in the middle of the river, I wouldn't give much for their chance. In that case they'd lose their guns, and run a great risk of being nabbed by crocodiles while swimming to land. But it's possible the accident may have happened close to shore and that they afterward pushed the boat off, in hopes of its being found by a searching party. We haven't seen any floating oars. That's a good sign."

"We'd better go on anyway," remarked Joe, "for even if the men are alive and well, they'd wait a long time before trying to make their way home through these tangled woods."

So we did go on, as fast as possible, without stopping to eat dinner; and about the middle of the afternoon came to a bend in the river, on turning which we saw before us, grounded on a sand-bank at the north side of the stream, and half in and half out of the water, the dead body of an enormous hippotamus, from which, as we pulled in, skurried away a swarm of jackals.

On jumping ashore, we found that the place had been intended for a camping-ground, as the boat's sail and oars, two blankets and many other things which I knew to be Harold's lay on the sand a little way inland, while a lot of palm-leaves, evidently prepared for, but not used as, a bed, seemed to prove that the party had designed passing at least one night there, but for some reason had not done so.

The most puzzling find, however, was one of the old muskets, which, with bent barrel and broken stock, lay by itself near the forest's edge.

On seeing the disabled weapon, my companions looked extremely grave and, stooping down, began to examine the sandy ground. But this was so trampled by innumerable tracks of wild beasts that no distinctive footprints could be picked out of the jumble, much less any idea gained as to what had become of the three human beings who had so strangely disappeared. The whole thing was a mystery. The floating boat—the dead monster—the broken gun—the abandoned goods—

the absent hunters—and the total lack of blood-stains—presented altogether an array of irreconcilable facts hard to understand.

"What do you make of it, men?" I presently asked.

"Well," began the elder brother, "I've got my own notion about it, but I'd rather not—hello! Look there!" and the man dashed off toward a contiguous gum-tree, pinned to the trunk of which, and about six feet up, we now noticed a closely-folded scrap of paper. Hastily tearing it down, Tom handed it to me, and, opening it, I read aloud:

"July 11th" (the day before).

"Hippo' smashed boat close to shore. Killed him afterwards. Turned boat adrift to give alarm. Were preparing to camp; Kola standing guard; lion sprang on him from bush; broke gun; carried him off before our eyes; was out of sight in a second. We've followed. May save the man. Wait here. We'll be back, if alive. H. BEETON."

This terse note was written, evidently in great haste, on a leaf torn from Harold's pocket-diary. When I had read it, Tom said:

"It's just as I feared. If not killed before now, the men are lost in the bush. Without a compass they couldn't find their way back to the river through a single half-mile, no, nor a quarter-mile, of these terrible thickets, unless they blazed a tree here and there as they went along. I suppose they've got their axe with them, as it's not here, but they'd never stop to mark a path, in their hurry to overhaul the lion."

"Would it be possible for them to do that, or to save their comrade?" I inquired.

"Such a thing has been done once, to my knowledge," Tom replied. "If the black wasn't killed on the spot—the lion's first blow fell on the gun-barrel, I think—and if he wasn't dragged off by the head or neck, they might come up in time to save what little life was left in him; for they could make their way through the bush faster, maybe, than the lion could with his load. That Kola's a big, heavy man, you know."

"What shall we do now?" I asked, feeling somewhat cheered by Tom's remarks.

"Stay right here and fire signal-shots every ten minutes till we get an answer, or till dark. If an answer does come, when there's, say, an hour of daylight left, we'll go out to meet the party at once. But if we don't hear a gun till after sundown, we won't budge till morning; for it would be certain death to go fifty rods into this bush in the dark. If any of the men are alive, they'll protect themselves by fire, and wait for us to come. I've no idea they're within hearing distance, though. Sound won't travel far—not more than a hundred rods anyway—through these crowded tree-tops."

In addition to our repeating-rifles and revolvers, we had brought with us a big, smoothbore duck-gun, and, while the old hunters busied themselves in gathering an immense heap of dry fuel, I kept loading and firing this at the stated intervals, using double charges of powder, but no shot. The great, six-gauge piece made a report like that of a little cannon, but no response ever came.

At sundown we kindled a fire, and prepared a meal, as we had eaten nothing since early morning.

That terrible night I shall never forget. Sleep was impossible. Attracted by the scent of the dead hippopotamus, whole herds of jackals, hyenas and other unclean beasts gathered in the outskirts of the forest, continually barking, screeching and howling in a perfect pandemonium of hideous discord, while, partially shielded by the great bulk of their prey, the bellowing of crocodiles added to the din, as the voracious reptiles tugged and tore at the hind-quarters of the monster.

Now and then, as we sat by our constantly replenished fire, we could hear the smaller beasts of prey yelp and scatter in affright, as, with disdainful growls, an occasional lion dashed into their midst and knocked them about in hungry rage. But in a moment the horrid concert would be renewed with increased energy, swelled by the addition of the tawny king's rumbling bass.

Our hearts sank within us as we listened. It seemed utter folly to hope that any human creature could wander for two days and nights through wilds infested by such an aggregate of noxious life, and yet survive. "If," I mournfully meditated, "the lost men have

miraculously escaped attack, the mere horror of the situation will surely kill that tenderly nurtured boy." But, after all our intimacy, I little knew the gallant youth.

Several times during the night, the ravenous brutes behind so crowded on those in front that some of the latter were pushed for a moment out of the dark bushes and into the rays of firelight. We watched revengefully for such chance and always shot on the instant, killing in this way, as we afterward found, three jackals, four foxes, and an ugly, spotted hyena.

When daylight came, we breakfasted, drew our boat well inland, turned it upside down, placed Harold's goods and most of our own under it, and covered the bottom with a thick layer of sand, to prevent warping. Then taking our rifles, a blanket each, two axes and a liberal supply of provisions and water, we struck into the forest, after comparing our pocket-compasses.

We took a northwest course, knowing that in that direction, and probably not many miles away, lay a mountain-range, of which, though invisible from our position, the lost men might have caught a glimpse in their wanderings, and attempted to reach.

Before starting, we had tried to find the spot whence the lion had emerged and departed, but we could not do so; hence we concluded that the elastic bushes had sprung into place again after the passage of the brute and his pursuers and hidden their trail.

This was my first attempt at exploring a truly tropical forest, and all I had ever read of its difficulties fell far short of the reality. Overhead, the giant trees were festooned and looped together by a network of clinging vines; while spiked mimosas, thorny acacias, prickly cacti and an endless variety of obstructing shrubs, closely matted together, covered the ground, and rendered our progress painfully slow.

How ever a lion could have borne a full-grown man through such a place without leaving a trail was a mystery indeed—but it was quickly solved. In fact, the beast had not done so at all; for presently, lying at right angles to our course, we came upon a clearly de-

fined path, running northeast, and starting, as we later discovered, from the southwest extremity of the crescent-shaped copse bounding the sandy cove—a point where we had never thought of looking for it, being on the opposite side from the spot where the broken musket lay.

Although, amid the multitude of other tracks, we could distinguish neither the lion's spoor nor the mark of boot-heels, it seemed certain that the men and the brute must have gone by this way, and we turned into it with renewed hope. So long as the trail lasted, we got on fairly well; but after following it for about a mile, it ended at the edge of a stony waste, whereon grew only a few trees and scattered clumps of jungle.

"This is a real lion country," observed Tom. "They never stay for long in the deep woods. The one we're after has his lair in some of those jungle mottes. But there's nothing to guide us now, and which way to go is a puzzler. If the men were within sight of the lion when he got here, there's one chance in a hundred that they've saved Kola's life, always supposing he wasn't killed at first, or on the way, and, as we've seen no blood, I don't think he was."

"We've not signalled for some time," said Joe. "Let's rest a little and fire a few shots. The sound will travel better here."

After a long pull at our water-flasks we fired three shots, at one-minute intervals, but heard no answer. Then Joe climbed a lofty sago-palm to get a view of the country ahead. When he came down, there was a new look on his face.

"Boys," said he, "this plain's about three miles across and reaches to a heavy belt of timber this side the foot-hills, and, if I'm not mightily mistaken, I saw the smoke of a fire rising above the trees. If it's sure-enough smoke, some of the men are alive, for there's no blacks round these parts."

This was glorious news—too good to be true, Tom Brackett thought; so he shinned up the tree himself, while we anxiously awaited his report. He had not ascended sixty feet, however, when he yelled out:

"It *is* smoke, certain, bearing three points east of

north," and down he came, looking as if he'd found a fortune.

Our gloomy thoughts vanished, and we hurried away over the rock-strewn level, steering straight for the indicated point.

Travelling was comparatively easy now. Getting along at the rate of two-and-a-half or three miles an hour, we had come to about the middle of the plateau, and were nearing a clump of jungle-bush, when, heavily winged, there arose from its depths a cloud of vultures!

Shuddering at the thought of what might lie within, we dashed through the opposing thorns, and there, close to the mouth of a rock-enclosed den, lay, not that which we had so dreaded to see, but the half-picked skeleton of an enormous lion! Near the head of the beast was a dark patch of dried blood, and, scattered around, were several fragments of cotton cloth.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" shouted Tom. "That brave boy has killed the lion here, and Kola has been saved alive. See! how the young fellow's torn his own shirt up to make bandages."

"How do you know 'twas Harold, and not Matu, who killed the brute?" I asked, willing to have my pride in the youth's exploit still further gratified.

"Why, don't you see that the head's bored through and through by an express bullet?" Tom replied. "Besides, all creation couldn't have coaxed the black close enough to do execution with his old blunderbuss, till the lion was dead. I know the breed!"

"I can't exactly tell," said the younger brother, "how far the smoke is from this plain, but maybe the men can hear a shot now," and he fired in the air.

Three seconds of suspense. Then came the faint but unmistakable report of an answering rifle, followed a moment later by the dull, hollow boom of Matu's big smoothbore. Two at least of the lost party were alive! We shook hands all around; then fired a confirmatory shot each, and pressed onward, still guided by compass; for, from the ground's level, we could not yet see the column of smoke—obviously between us and it stood a greater or less tract of dense forest.

This was reached in another half-hour, but before attempting to penetrate it, we fired an inquiring volley. Quick as a flash came the answer in Harold's own ringing, "Hello! Hello!" apparently not more than three hundred yards distant!

Cheering like mad, we plunged into the wondrous growth of living woods, tearing, creeping, scrambling, and sometimes chopping our way under, over, around or through all obstructions, until, after full twenty minutes of fearful toil, we burst out on the gravelly bank of a now tiny stream, one of the mountain feeders of the Tuwego.

In a moment, the gallant boy, sound and whole, but sobbing with joy, was in my arms, while Tom and Joe, half-crazy with delight, put in a congratulatory hug as chance offered.

On recovering our senses and looking around, we saw Matu sitting on the ground by his countryman, who was lying on a lion-skin, alive and conscious, though apparently seriously hurt. In response to our anxious inquiries, he replied:

"Me not dead yet. Be all right bimeby."

The party had been, we learned, forty-eight hours in this accidentally-found refuge—a treeless slope evidently overflowed in times of high water—and had lived entirely upon birds killed by Matu, whose old musket, however contemptible for ball, was admirably adapted to throwing shot.

As I cannot do Harold Beeton justice by repeating his modest version of the story, I will give its substance, as gathered piecemeal from the two Wagindos, in my own words:

It seems that, having enjoyed lots of sport coming up the river, they had purposely prolonged their stay. Early on the morning of the 11th, they had just run their boat's bow ashore at the sandy cove, when an old "rogue" hippopotamus suddenly rose from the deep water astern. Matu foolishly fired a charge of shot at the beast, which, enraged, rushed on them and crushed the boat's stern between his jaws. Then, striking bottom, he was following the party ashore, when Harold,

jumping to one side, in the shallows, killed him by a single bullet under the ear.

With some difficulty, they stranded the carcass; then took everything out of the boat and turned it adrift, intending to remain on the open, bush-bounded sand-field until help should come. Beeton and Matu began to prepare a camp, while Kola, with shouldered musket, walked proudly to and fro, sentry fashion. On one of his beats, he had approached the forest's edge, and was standing still, facing it, when a lion sprang from behind a bush, struck the gun a fearful blow, and knocked the man senseless. Before the others could catch up their arms, the beast had seized his victim by the shoulder, and disappeared.

Matu confessed that he had done his utmost to dissuade his young master from following the lion, thinking the thing an utterly useless risk; but Harold persisted, declaring that he'd try to recover and bury the man's body at all hazards, or, if he still lived, rescue him. So, hastily scribbling the note found by us, he started at once, compelling the reluctant native to go along.

Striking into the forest at the spot whence the lion had emerged, they quickly found the trail and soon came within sight of the beast, who did not bother himself about them at all as he jogged along at a dog-trot. Harold took the lead; but, though never more than fifty yards behind the lion, he dared not shoot for fear of hitting Kola.

Expecting every moment to see the monster drop his burden and turn to attack him, the boy kept right on, hoping thus to gain a favorable shot. But the fearless, or perhaps disdainful, brute never relaxed his hold—never even looked around, and, beyond occasionally uttering a murmuring growl, seemed actually indifferent to his pursuer's presence.

When the creature finally entered the jungle-copse, Harold was within twenty yards of him and dashed into the cover without a moment's hesitation, disregarding the warning cry of Matu, who, in deadly terror, ingloriously climbed a tree, whence he overlooked all that

next occurred. He saw, he said, the lion drag his prey through the low entrance of his den, drop it inside, and then at once start out again, as if at last determined to chastise the impudent hunter. But, as he was coming out of the narrow passageway, Harold, who was hurriedly unstrapping the blanket roll from his back, preparatory to entering, and was standing at one side of the hole, sent a bullet through his head and he fell stone dead without so much as a kick!

"Bravest white man ever was!" said Matu, on reaching this point. "Then I slid down tree and skinned lion, but Master Beeton he pulled Kola out of den, poured water in him's mouth and tied up him's shoulder, good, same as doctor-man."

Kola's wounds were a broken collar-bone and a badly lacerated shoulder, deep into which the lion's fangs had sunk while dragging his heavy body along. He soon revived, it seems, and then the party left the den, Harold tenderly supporting the injured man, and Matu carrying the two guns and the pelt. On attempting, however, to regain the point at which they had entered the plateau, they became completely bewildered—"turned round," as lost men will; and after wandering about for several hours they struck at a venture into the forest, coming, by good fortune, to the creek, which they reached by penetrating a much narrower belt of timber than that through which we had forced our way.

By this time Kola had become too weak to proceed, and Harold decided to remain by the water until he should get stronger.

When we found them, both of the unwounded men were nearly worn out by fatigue, as the place was so infested by wild beasts that they had been obliged to keep up a big fire day and night, subsisting meanwhile upon such small game as happened to come within easy reach. Several times they heard the trumpeting of elephants, and, without going twenty yards from the fire, Harold had shot a too inquisitive leopard.

My two old hunters at once took charge of matters, prepared hot coffee and proper food for the party, made Beeton and his comrade go to bed, poulticed Kola's

inflamed shoulder, and made things in general cozy and comfortable.

The good fellows sat up all night—their second sleepless one—keeping watch and nursing the patient, who next morning was able to walk, leaning on the arm of his preserver, to whom he showed the most touching gratitude and affection.

Having three axes now, we soon cut a passable way out to the plain. While traversing this, we came across, and ultimately killed, a bull elephant, whose tusks, extracted by much labor, we found, on reaching Kitope, weighed eighty-two pounds.

Notwithstanding the delay of securing and carrying these, we arrived at the river a little after noon. All our chattels were as we left them, but the bones of the hippopotamus were picked clean. The great skull was still intact, however, and Harold preserved it to add to his trophies.

We stayed three days at this place and had excellent sport, killing a fine lioness, one black and two spotted leopards, several crocodiles and an immense bustard (splendid eating), besides any number of wild geese, ducks and other waterfowl. The details would make of this a mere hunting-story, but I may say that eighteen-year-old Harold proved not only the life and soul of the party, but the most successful hunter of us all.

On the morning of the 17th we packed all our peltries and other belongings, as well as our six selves, into the boat—loading her down to the water's edge, by the way—and, after camping out one night more, arrived safely at home on the 18th without further serious adventure.

Yet Kola's "bimeby" was long in coming; for it was fully six months before he was perfectly sound again, during all which time Harold and another friend paid a surgeon to attend him and supplied every want of himself and family. The man's recovery, under the circumstances, was, the doctor said, almost a miracle, as even much slighter wounds, made by a lion's or tiger's teeth, he had usually found to prove fatal.

This thrilling story of the Civil War, written for ROMANCE by Frank H. Sweet, forms the second in our group of Adventure Stories.

UNDER FIRE.

VICKSBURG boys never lacked for excitement. The great river rolled before them, and its capabilities were exhaustless. Steamers passed back and forth at all hours of the day and night, and it was seldom that several of them could not be found at the wharves, discharging or taking on cargo. And naturally the boys felt it incumbent on them to see that everything was done right. No freight could be properly transferred without their presence. No passenger left the boat without the consciousness of being under close surveillance.

The wharves were the common property of the boys, and woe to the wharfinger who said them nay. His life was henceforth a burden to him, and the juvenile ingenuity of the city was freely taxed in his behalf. But usually the wharfinger was a wise man in his generation, and freely conceded what he knew could not be withheld. There were many cosy nooks among the piles of freight and cotton-bales, and here the boys met to discuss the present, and lay plans for the future. And generally the future oscillated between steamboating and piracy.

But when the early sixties saw the freight of steamers gradually change from cotton-bales and merchandise to soldiers and munitions of war, the ambition of the boys veered round to the possession of muskets and revolvers. Swimming contests and piratical schemes were forgotten in the quickly formed military company, and in marches and countermarches up and down the streets.

The question of social distinction had long ago been settled, and those who could out-swim, out-dive and out-run the others had taken easy precedence.

So it was that ragged Newt Bixby, whose father fired on the *River Belle*, became leader, and Charlie Calhoun

second in command. Charlie's father was a colonel in the — Mississippi, and was with Lee in Virginia. Charlie was a born aristocrat, and had been "raised" on a large sugar plantation, where there were always hundreds of negroes who were ready to obey the slightest wish of the "young mas'r." He had thus naturally acquired a haughty manner, but was generous, brave and noble in disposition, and a universal favorite with the boys. His knowledge of tactics and military matters seemed wonderful, and it was not long before it became a saying among the boys that he furnished the brains and Newt the dash for the company.

All the leisure time was now spent in drills and manœvres. There were few able men in the city outside the garrison. Even the older boys were on duty with the guard, or away in the regular army. Provisions were getting scarce as the river communications began to close up, and every face grew anxious and expectant. The boys forgot their years, and went into the drill with the earnestness of those who expected to be called to the front at any time.

Gradually the gunboats of the enemy crept toward the city, until the entire water-front was occupied. Then soldiers and batteries seemed to spring up from all the land-sides, and the city awoke to the fact that it was besieged. It could be only temporary, of course, for were there not twenty-seven thousand of the bravest of the Southern army on guard? What mattered it how superior were the forces of the enemy?

But it became terribly real when the bombardment commenced. The previous silence had seemed almost oppressive, and when it was suddenly broken by the thundering crashes of artillery, which made the ground shake and the very foundations of the buildings tremble, pandemonium itself might have broken loose. The sky was cobwebbed with the criss-crossing red lines streaming from flying bomb-shells. Broken window-glass rattled upon the sidewalks, and a hailstorm of iron fragments descended upon the city.

No wonder the non-combatants frantically sought a place of safety; cellars, strong buildings, anything

which promised shelter. But a few hours showed them how futile such shelter was. The screaming shells and heavy masses of iron had little respect for frame buildings and stone walls.

All through the day they crouched trembling, and not till the darkness put an end to the uproar did they venture forth to ascertain the damage done.

As the days went by, and week followed week in slow, dreadful suspense, the first unreasoning fear began to wear off, and the course of a shrieking shell was watched with a tolerably correct calculation of its probable fall.

Holes, or tunnels, were dug in the perpendicular clay banks back of the city, and whenever the bombardment recommenced, the women and children hurried to them for safety. The caves were branched like the letter Y, and would hold from ten to thirty persons. As there were upward of three thousand non-combatants in the city, it took a long line of caves to accommodate them.

Before the end of the six weeks' siege, many had become so used to the noise of the shells that they retreated very leisurely to the caves when the firing recommenced. One eye, however, was always kept warily on the heavens.

During the first few days the Vicksburg Cadets were very prompt in their attendance upon the caves, but one afternoon, as a sudden shower of hail sent every one hurrying from the city, Captain Newt Bixby communicated with his officers and, with their aid, managed to collect most of the company outside the caves.

"Soldiers must not be children!" he shouted, his clear young voice rising above the din of the flying shells. "If any of the boys want to enter the caves, let them go now. We don't want them. We have had our scare, and now it is time to show ourselves worthy of our fathers and brothers. All the Cadets who remain in the ranks now must do it with the free will of soldiers who are ready to die with their comrades."

He paused a moment, but no one stirred.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "Now, boys, there are nearly sixty of us, and I think we can be as good soldiers as

some of the boys who have entered the army. We are too young for that, so we must look after the duties our fathers have been obliged to leave. Corporal Johnson will deploy twenty men between the caves and the city to assist such as need it, while the rest of us will return to the streets and do what we can to help stragglers and to prevent fires."

Even as he spoke, there came a wild shriek from a group of women who were hurrying toward one of the more distant caves. A fragment of shell had struck one of their number and torn away part of her left arm. A small child held by that arm had fallen to the ground, apparently unhurt. At the same moment the storm of shell increased, and the forms of the woman and her child could hardly be seen for the clouds of dust. The rest of the women fled shrieking to the caves, and most of the spectators quickly followed their example. Even the Cadets wavered for a moment as the iron rain began to fall about them. But only for a moment. Then Captain Newt Bixby's voice was heard forming the men into a compact body, and as they marched back to the city, Corporal Johnson and one of his men were seen moving the wounded woman to the nearest cave.

Reaching the centre of the desolate city, the boys separated into squads and sought different parts of the town. Some of the inhabitants still remained in their homes, and occasionally a store-door was found open and its proprietor peering from behind a pile of barrels or boxes. During the afternoon several incipient fires were put out, and a bomb taken care of before it had time to explode.

After a few weeks, the boys became accustomed to the noise of battle and could hear the shells whistle by with supreme indifference. The excitement of action they found to be immeasurably preferable to being half-smothered in the caves. Several of their number had been more or less hurt, and brave Corporal Johnson had met a soldier's death.

The city was becoming more desolate every day. Most of the grocery and provision stores were closed. They had nothing left to sell. Flour was $200 a barrel,

corn $10 a bushel, bacon $5 a pound, and coffee and poultry not to be had at any price. Mule-meat had to take the place of poultry, beef and mutton.

The streets were littered with broken shells and bombs. Here and there a citizen, for want of other employment, had gathered a ton or more of broken iron and piled it up in his front yard. The strange pyramids were ghastly reminders of the times. There were no newspapers or visitors to give news of the outside world. Nothing but the incessant bomb-shelling from the implacable circle outside. The streets were deserted, fruit and candy-booths a thing of the past; the non-combatants had no energy for anything but to walk back and forth, back and forth—and wait.

Hardly an entire window-pane of glass remained in the city. Most of the chimneys were more or less demolished. Nearly all of the buildings had great ragged holes torn through the boarding and plaster. But the people were getting used to it. It took an unusually severe tempest of shell to start them leisurely for the caves, to which a few scattering shot had formerly sent them skurrying.

One day Captain Newt Bixby and his men saw a tongue of flame shoot up from one of the large public buildings near the wharves. It was in one of the most exposed situations, and under the direct fire of the gunboats. The flame was on the roof, and, unless it could be extinguished, would undoubtedly destroy the building and all the valuable papers within. There was no means of entrance, as the edifice had been closed since the beginning of the siege, and the keys were in the possession of the commandant of the garrison, half-a-mile away.

But the Vicksburg Cadets had been taking severe lessons in a very practical school, and veteran firemen could not have been more prompt or efficacious. Like many other Southern towns, Vicksburg was well supplied with shade-trees. Several of these threw their limbs directly over the building. Like squirrels the boys went up the trees, and were soon on the roof fighting the fire. It had made little headway and the boys

extinguished it before help arrived from the garrison. In the excitement, little attention had been paid to the storm of shell, but when the soldiers from the fort slowly descended into the now open building, they assisted the Cadets in bearing away three of their number.

The next day General Lamb sent for Newt Bixby and Charlie Calhoun. When they were ushered into his presence, he turned from the group of officers he was conversing with and regarded them earnestly. Newt had an ugly scar from an exploding shell across his cheek, while one of Charlie's arms was in a sling.

After a short silence the General said in half-sad, half-musing tones:

"Strange that our cause should waver when even the children act the part of veterans!" Then, more briskly: "I have been hearing strange reports of you, my lads. If your strength was equal to your courage, I would have you join the river expedition to-night. Sometimes a youngster's agility and quick wit are of as much service as the greater strength of a man."

"Try us!" cried both boys in a breath.

The General smiled.

"All in good time, my boys. You seem to have the soldier's ambition of being rewarded for one brave deed with the opportunity of encountering still greater perils. But I sent for you for a different purpose. Are there any good swimmers in your company? I mean boys who could swim a mile, and pass half the time under water, if necessary. They will have to pick their way in the dark, dodge gunboats and river sentries, meet deadly perils, and, if they succeed, be rewarded with the consciousness of having done the cause inestimable service."

While he was speaking, the boys listened with flushed cheeks, and they now pressed forward eagerly. But as the General nodded significantly at Charlie's useless arm, the latter drew back in confusion.

"Never mind, my boy. I have other work that you can do. So you understand the river thoroughly?" he continued, turning to Newt, and speaking in a quick, sharp voice.

"He's the best swimmer on the river, and can swim under water 'most as well as a fish," said Charlie, before Newt had time to reply.

The General looked pleased.

"I think you are the man we want. The success of the enterprise means more than you could understand. I have been cautioned against entrusting the affair to a boy, but I think a sharp lad can pass the lines with less difficulty than a man. You may select two of the best swimmers in your company to accompany you, and report to me here at twelve o'clock to-night, for instructions. In the mean time I would advise you to get as much sleep as you can."

As he turned away, and resumed his conversation with the officers, the boys concluded that the audience was over and slowly left the room.

When they reached the corner where they must separate, their hands met for a moment.

"Perhaps we sha'n't see each other again," said Charlie, soberly.

"It'll be a tight squeeze," replied Newt, "but if we get the message through the lines, I won't mind so much what happens to me."

Late in the afternoon, a dark mass of clouds began to overspread the sky, and when the boys went to the General's quarters for instruction, they had to literally feel their way. A strong wind was blowing and a drizzling rain had set in from the southeast. It would be a bad night.

The General was writing when they entered, but presently turned from his desk.

"It will be a terrible night," he said, abruptly. "Do you think you can reach Cane Point?" The boys started. Cane Point was over a mile down the stream, and surrounded with such a network of snags and sunken limbs that it was considered dangerous, even by daylight.

"It'll be 'n awful job ter swim 'ginst the win' that fur," said one of the boys, looking white.

"I agree with you," said the General, quietly. "Besides, you can do better service here, fighting fire.

And do you two wish to risk your lives on the river?" turning to Newt and his companion.

"If you will let us," they answered.

"Very well! Here are two dispatches, exactly alike. If one of you fails, the other may succeed. You will go to the little cabin under the three live-oaks and give the papers to the cripple you will find there. If you succeed, show a light from Live-Oak Hill. A lantern swung in a half-circle will answer. You had better not attempt to return until the siege is raised." He paused a moment, then added in an impressive voice: "The papers must not be seen by the enemy and, if necessary, you must die yourselves to insure their destruction. Now go."

The boys made their way slowly and cautiously along until they reached the nearest wharf. The wind was blowing fiercely in their faces, and they could hear the beat of the waves against the spiles. Overhead, everything was inky black, except for the occasional streaks of fire across the heavens.

In spite of their years, and the excitement of the moment, the boys fully realized the perils of the undertaking, and made every preparation to meet it. Their clothing was removed and carefully placed under a pile of lumber. It did not occur to them that they would probably never see it again, even should the trip be successful. Then fastening the waterproof bags containing the dispatches more securely about their necks, they dropped quietly into the river and disappeared in the darkness.

There was little of the excitement of battle about it; nothing but the solid wall of blackness around, which was now and then cut by a flash, showing glimpses of the black hulls of the silent watch-dogs before them. Sometimes the flashes were followed by such deafening, reverberating crashes that the boys were obliged to clinch their teeth firmly to keep from turning back to the wharf.

The current was in their favor, but the wind against them. However, it served to deaden the sound of the waves against their faces. As they neared the line of

gunboats, they swam as lightly as possible, keeping all but their faces under water. The darkness was full of ears now, and even the wind and waves could not smother unusual sounds. One by one they felt, rather than saw, the dark hulls glide by. Frequently they had to sink under water as a sudden flash showed sentinel forms within a few yards. A dozen times they were on the point of being discovered, but escaped by a seeming miracle. Their progress was slow, laborious and uncertain. Sometimes their hands would encounter the side of a vessel before they were aware of its vicinity. Since leaving the wharf neither had dared to speak. In spite of its seeming desolation, the river was keenly alert. Once or twice Newt fancied from his companion's labored breathing that he was becoming exhausted.

Suddenly, as they were moving along side by side, a great light flashed upon them from the deck of a vessel close by, and a dozen stern faces met their eyes.

The boys sank instantly, and as they disappeared from sight, a shower of bullets rained upon the water. Second after second passed, and a glimpse of a white face was seen several rods down the river and was met by another patter of bullets. A little to the right another white face was seen for an instant and received a similar welcome. Several minutes passed, and a dark spot appeared still lower down. A perfect storm of bullets almost instantly fell about it.

A few more seconds, and then somebody said, "I guess they're done fur." The lights disappeared, and the vessel returned to its dark watchfulness.

Hour after hour went by, and the storm increased in violence. Limbs were torn from the trees and hurled into the streets. The blank expanse of the river gave no intimation of the silent enemy. His presence was swallowed up in the world of darkness.

In his quarters the General paced up and down uneasily. He had reckoned much on the success of this enterprise. It meant much to the cause. In spite of its apparent impossibility, he had had hopes that the

boys might succeed—had almost brought himself to believe that they would.

But as the hours went by, he ceased to glance toward Live-Oak Hill. The enterprise had failed, and the brave boys were at the bottom of the river. Well, they had met a soldier's death and, somewhere, would find a soldier's reward. Their fathers and brothers had met the same fate, or probably would meet it in the near future.

Suddenly, as he passed the window, he uttered an exclamation of surprise. Surely there was a light on Live-Oak Hill, a lantern being swung to and fro. Even as it moved, a brother officer entered the room with beaming face and the two grasped hands.

Meanwhile a half-unconscious boy—only one—was being cared for by a tall man, who seemed to have forgotten his supposed crippled condition as he moved quietly about the room. The boy was covered with bruises and cuts, and blood flowed freely from half-a-dozen wounds upon him. He looked as though he had been pounded from head to foot with jagged clubs.

Eventually he crawled out, with little injury save the scars; and these, his life-long friend Charlie often reminded him, were not scars but decorations.

The early life of the New England settlers was full of perils. Even when they attempted to have a merry-making, they too often paid dear for it, as in the following true narrative, the third in our group of Adventure Stories. It is written for ROMANCE by Emilie Egan.

A FEARFUL STRAW-RIDE.

THE young people of to-day can scarcely realize what a "straw-ride" was like a hundred years ago, or that the fun-provoking excursion enjoyed so much nowadays had an ancient and necessary origin. It is probable, however, that as much fun and laughter accompanied the straw-ride then as now, for young people are alike in all ages and the world over.

When our English forefathers settled first in the New England States, especially Vermont and New Hampshire, they established their homes upon the highlands; because, strange as it now seems, the larger lakes, ponds, and rivers—where the beautiful meadows now are—were compassed about with miles and miles of thickly wooded swamps, which were almost impassable even in summer.

Last summer I climbed the mountain which is the scene of this story, and I counted there forty old cellar-holes, overgrown with grass and brush, but indisputable evidence of former homes.

I asked stupidly—feeling certain the answer would be, "Killed by Indians or devoured by wild beasts"—"Where did all the people go to who once lived here?" The practical one of our party answered, "Oh, they moved down gradually, for as the woods were cut off, the swamps dried up."

A hundred years ago, the settlers on the mountain made nothing of the deep snows which in winter covered all that country, but turned out with shovels and ox-sleds—the only vehicles known in the mountains in those times—and manfully "broke roads," in order that their social intercourse with their "Notchite" friends might not be interrupted.

Especially was this the case in a certain winter, when Mr. Stevens, the most "forehanded" of them all, had built a frame mansion, and was going to give a house-warming ball. A string of ox-teams was sent over the rough, drifted road, and all was ready for the revellers.

There were enough young people to fill two sleds, and Thad Waldo and Freeman Eddy, each of whom owned two yoke of oxen, were chosen as teamsters. Their sleds were filled with straw and blankets, ready for their respective loads, and they started merrily off at four o'clock, reaching their destination before dark. They stayed there until three in the morning, gayly dancing and feasting, with never a thought of danger.

When the teamsters went out to "tackle up" for the return home, they found the sky heavy with dark clouds and much warmer than when they came over.

"Guess we're going to have our January thaw," remarked young Waldo.

"And I'm afraid we'll get a slump over the south side. It won't be very easy riding over those stumps and stones," returned Eddy.

For a mile or so the high spirits of the party made the woods and mountains ring with song and laughter, but by the time they reached the heights, the fatigue of the dance began to tell upon them, and the younger of them commenced making pillows of the laps of their elders, who, also, soon became silent.

Waldo and Eddy, as they reached the notch, jumped from their sleds to better guide their teams down the mountain, and the latter shouted as he reached the road, "Old Buck and Bright will be more lively company than that sleepy crowd."

The drowsy ripple of laughter which followed this sally was suddenly drowned by a horrible scream which seemed to fairly fill the pass, echoing and re-echoing among the mountains as if being answered by a hundred others.

The two teamsters sprang quickly to the head of their teams, now trembling and cuddling up to each other in fright. The men knew that they had but a moment to prevent a wild stampede down the mountain; for, as

soon as the poor oxen should recover from their first alarm, they would seek safety in flight, when it seemed impossible that the whole party could escape being dashed to pieces.

Every person in the company, from the oldest to the youngest, fully appreciated their double danger. They knew that that defiant scream came from a hungry panther—and that it meant death.

Instantly every young man on the sleds had his gun to his shoulder—they never went without them in "those good old days"—peering sharply among the hemlocks which lined the road, for the two fiery eyes, the only part of the ugly beast which they expected to see in the cloudy darkness. Failing a shot, they knew that he would jump for them, when they passed under the tree where he had lodged, when he gave his warning scream. Should he miss, it would in no wise end the chase, for they knew that by his huge, vaulting-springs he could soon forge ahead to a vantage-ground in another tree.

The road through which these hapless young people took their fearful ride is nearly obliterated now by a sturdy growth of young trees, except the "Three Ledges" around which the road ran. No trees can ever cover those cruel rocks. Here was the fearful climax which must end such a race, even should they keep together until they reached the ledges.

In thirty seconds, quick-witted young Waldo had unhitched his leading oxen and turned them into the deep snow, hoping that they might possibly attract the panther. Thus he obtained also a better chance to control the others. By this time a second scream, more defiant than the other, rang through the woods.

This second scream came from behind them over through the notch, and was immediately answered by the first, making the poor, trembling oxen fairly bound with fright, and this time sending them off on a mad gallop. The teamsters instinctively caught hold of yoke and horn. Young Waldo shouted back to those in the sleds, "Hold on for your lives!"

It was an almost useless warning. The young men who had risen were thrown among those who had not,

their extended guns dealing cruel blows as they fell. But not a word of fear or complaint was uttered by the hardy young settlers, and no sound was heard for a few minutes except Waldo's and Eddy's shouts in their endeavors to check the mad speed of their teams; yet it seemed to those in the sleds, as they tossed and bounded from side to side, catching and losing their hold upon the stakes, that the next stump or stone must certainly wreck them.

Even the panther was forgotten in their efforts to keep their places, until the chase was freshly announced by the united screams of the panthers, now certainly both behind them. That the oxen had distanced them in their first mad run was plain; but that gave the unfortunate straw-riders no hope of an ultimate escape, for they could now count by the screams the rapidly-made jumps of their pursuers, which were fast closing in upon them.

Waldo's team, though much winded, was running fairly well, through his timely forethought in turning loose his leaders; while Eddy, who had had barely time to catch the horn of his near ox, had no control over his leaders, which, in their successive frights at each scream from the panthers, bolted frightfully, adding to their danger as well as lessening their chances of escape by flight.

It would seem that the dangers already surrounding the party could not be increased, but those in the last sled became suddenly aware that Waldo's abandoned leaders were in the road behind them. They recognized the danger immediately, and tried, by flinging out their free arms and shouting, to change the course of the pursuing oxen, but the poor, terror-blinded creatures plunged straight on, heeding nothing.

There was no time to escape this new danger, had the occupants of the sled any strength to do aught but hold on, and each face turned toward the end of the sled awaiting the crash of the galloping hoofs upon the sled-boards. But when the shock came, it almost seemed that Providence interfered to save them, for only one ox planted his feet over the endboard, while

the other fell with only his big horns and head inside, where by a miracle they hung, only to be savagely shaken off by the next stump or stone.

The continually nearing screams of the panthers showed that they were still in hot pursuit, and there was a regretful hope in each mind that the poor oxen might not be able to rise, thereby becoming a sacrifice for the safety of the load of human beings clinging to the sled.

Not so; for in a moment, just as a panther sprang from a tree across the road, probably not fifty feet behind the sled, the oxen were in the road again and madder than ever with fright.

Eddy, who had been obliged to look ahead, though comprehending fully all that had occurred behind, knew what the others did not, that Waldo's team must be far ahead, for he had not heard nor seen anything of him for a long time; and they themselves were flying past the "Boulder Spurs," with the three dangerous ledges less than a half-mile beyond.

Turning his face back, he shouted hoarsely, "For God's sake, shoot the oxen and be quick about it, for we are nearing the ledges!"

Two shots instantly answered his command, and, in the short interval of partial silence that ensued, he heard two sounds, which, strong, brave man as he was, he never forgot, and always remembered with a sense of unforgiven cruelty. It was a long, mournful "loo," a pitiful petition for help, as it were, from one of the doomed oxen; and, "Oh, see! The poor thing is dragging his mate!" in a sweet, girlish voice. But soon the poor fellow was left far behind, and when they heard the next scream from the panthers, an agonized bellow followed, telling of the fate of the oxen.

For a while all believed themselves free from the panthers, and the oxen which were drawing them evidently shared their belief, for they showed signs of slackening speed; though ten minutes before, it had seemed as though nothing could save the party from being swept over the ledges, if carried upon them with such fearful speed. Now all began to hope that the team

might be slowed up sufficiently to allow them to jump off. They began to take an interest in young Eddy's efforts to stop his oxen, and even noticed that Waldo was not ahead of them. They saw that Eddy was redoubling his efforts to slacken up, with a vigorous use of his thick goad upon the noses of his oxen. The stick had not left his hand in all that terrible ride down the mountain. Then he shouted, "Get ready to jump when I tell you, and jump to the upper side."

A few more cruelly vigorous blows. Then, jerking the head of his near ox sharply round, he cried, "Jump!' And with one wild shout the whole sled-load landed in a struggling mass in the deep, soft snow.

Young Eddy, when he saw his sled empty, let go his hold upon his oxen and fell backward, through sheer exhaustion; but almost immediately he sprang to his feet again in horror. The worst danger they had been in to-night was upon them; for either one of their former pursuers, or an entirely new comer, had uttered his blood-curdling scream just over their heads.

They were in a narrow opening only a few feet from the first ledge, where there was a sheer descent of sixty feet, with a rise of twenty feet of broken rock above them. Nothing could save them now from an encounter with a hungry panther.

Were the poor oxen fated that night, one and all, to perish that their precious load might be saved?

The oxen had made but a few staggering bounds away, just to the open ledge, when they were checked and sent huddling and backing upon each other again by the sudden renewal of danger, and the leaders, in their efforts to get back to their human friends, turned completely round upon the other yoke, twisting them until the sled grated over the ledge.

Just for a moment the horrified young people forgot their own danger, as they watched the white stripes in the leaders' faces and listened to the sound of the sled-runners on the rocky ledge; then another death-threatening scream, and a huge body shot through the misty air. There was a frightful bellowing and a short scramble of hoofs; then sled, oxen, and panther disap-

peared, to be heard from but once more with a crashing thud as they struck the rocks below.

The suppressed feelings of the straw-riders found vent this time in a regular stampede for their homes; the girls were crying and sobbing, and unconditionally accepted help from the young men; and all, though it was mid-winter, forgot completely their lost wraps, caps, hoods and mittens.

All thought for certain that Waldo's team must have gone over the ledge, but only a few of the strongest young men had breath to express their grief or pity. Their surprise and joy were about equal, after they had recovered their breath sufficiently to see, count, and remember names, to find in the crowd of settlers coming out to meet them every individual of the first load.

Waldo and Eddy suffered the most from the adventure; Eddy had rheumatic fever. Waldo constituted himself doctor and nurse-in-general to him, and they talked over many a time the fearful incidents of the ride.

The two places where the oxen fell were made the common hunting-grounds of both settlements, and many a panther, wolf, and fox were killed there before the winter was through.

The intense and poetic feeling which is characteristic of Mrs. Harriet Prescott Spofford's serious work finds full expression in this beautiful love-story from her pen. It was first published in *Harper's Magazine.*

THE DRIFT-WOOD FIRE.

It was our last night at the Beach House, and those of us that were left had clustered round the fire that had been laid on the hearth of the great hall, where all summer we had been wont to do our masquerading and our dancing.

We were none of us very gay; indeed, we were some of us very sad. We were just about to separate, and summer was over. It was a wild autumn storm outside, and there was not another house within a half-dozen miles of this lonesome hostelry; but, more than all, it was two days and a night since we had seen or heard of Raymonde, and everybody about the place loved Raymonde, whose royal foreign name only bespoke a royal foreign nature; for how such a tropical soul came out of our commonplace temperate existence and civilization was not to be explained. He was wonderfully charming in his appearance: dark and pale, with glowing eyes as dark as eyes dare be, and the dark locks falling over a wide low white brow. As you looked up at his face, you were reminded of something of the princes in the halls of Eblis before their hearts took fire, so gentle a melancholy was stamped there. Yet it was not easy to understand this melancholy; he seemed to have almost everything in his life that made other people glad and gay. He was rich, and had no sordid cares; he was so manly that women adored him, and so gentle that men loved him; he had such marvellous powers that he could acquit himself well in almost every one of the arts—could paint, could model, could harmonize; and he had such discretion that he contented himself with swallow flights, and stretched no broad canvases, planned no great symphonies. He liked his gun better

than any of his playthings, and really seemed to be a little proud of being able to toss a penknife in the air, and split a bullet on its descending blade, and of nothing else. He had been at the Beach House since June, and had unconsciously led all hearts captive, although he cared for nothing less. We were a little interested to see how he would strike Marion Mercer when she arrived, with her mother and aunt, and the maids, and the bird, and the dogs, without which Mrs. Mercer never travelled. Apparently he struck her no more than if he had been the shadow of somebody else. She never had any color, and so none rose to her cheek, and no fresh light came to her eyes as—when hailed and saluted on the piazza, as she came in, by Sallie Worthen—Mr. Raymonde, standing near, was presented by Sallie with the air of treasure-trove; and Miss Mercer bowed in her slow, graceful way, and passed on, while Mr. Raymonde lifted his hat as indifferently. We wondered a little that Marion did not give so extraordinary a person, as we had come to consider him, a second glance, and at Mr. Raymonde's languid carelessness as well in the presence of Marion, who had never known anything but conquest; but perhaps we were just as well content, although, for my part, nothing of the sort made any difference to me—a sick old maid, on the outside of all such matters. But sometimes the lookers-on in Vienna have a better time than the players in the pageant; and I realized it one evening, after a week had gone by, in which no one saw Raymonde looking over Marion's sketching-book, or asking her to dance, or exchanging a single glance with her, or Marion's eye once flashing in his direction. I had taken a longer walk on the lonely beach than I had intended, and, quite tired with hurrying, I had stopped to rest, on my way back, in the shadow of the cliff, and I think I must have fallen asleep a few moments; for all at once I started, shivering, to think what had happened, and finding that it was quite dark, and to hear a voice—a voice that I knew at once was Raymonde's—exclaiming, "Marion, how long do you think I can endure this?"

"I don't know what you mean, sir," was the cold reply.

"Aha, Miss Marion Mercer!" thought I; "now I know why it is that none of these suitors suit. And you and Mr. Raymonde such strangers, too!".

"Marion!" he exclaimed again, in a tone that would have rent her heart if she had had any, I thought.

"Be so good as to let me pass," she said, very low and distinctly.

"No," he returned, "not till I know of what it is that you hold me guilty, why my letters have been returned, unopened, and my name refused at your door."

"You wish to know!" she cried out, as if repression suddenly ceased, and the flood-gates were opened. "You dare to address me so—you whose wife I had promised to be, whom I adored, who forsook me for a dancing girl, and left me desolate!"

There was one moment's silence.

"And you believed this!" he gasped. "I suppose it was the dancing girl who stood to me for my picture of the Almée—that innocent little thing, the support of mother and sisters. Since you could believe that," he said, in a voice shaking with suppressed passion, "I will not ask you to believe the truth, that, sketching in the Maremma, I was seized with fever, and nursed back to life by the peasants living in a tomb, and came to my reason only to find that you and all of yours had left Rome—had left it with insult and obloquy to me. As for the dancing girl—my God! is it possible? You believe that of me! I ask nothing more of you." And I heard his steps ringing on the shingle; and then Marion had sunk down where she was, in a storm of uncontrollable and unappeasable sobs, from knowledge of which I crept away like a contemptible eavesdropper, for those sobs said more than either she or Raymonde had. But if I had stirred before, it would have only increased the trouble, after all.

It was the night for the band to play; but I did not see Marion that evening among all the gay couples, till, just before eleven o'clock, she was visible, leaning against an open window-way, in her creamy crape, and

her shawl of red Madeira lace like a crimson cobweb round her hair and shoulders, not a trace of tears or of any emotion on her proud and lovely face, as she listened rather dreamily to the music, took one turn down the room with Mr. Munson, and going up the stairs, in her slow, calm way of doing everything, passed Mr. Raymonde coming in wild and wet from the sea. I kept my own counsel, and rather pleased myself with the idea of being the single spectator of the spectacle.

It was a day or two before Mr. Raymonde appeared upon the scene—delving at his sketches in his own rooms, they said—and then as naturally as ever he sauntered down among the bathers, and took his dip, and frolicked with the children as usual. Water did not make him look as it does some people; the more he was wet, the closer curled the dark rings of his hair, that had only a long wave in it when dry, and the rich color lighted his cheek, that was always so pale on shore. Marion, too, was one of those women that are not ruined by sea-bathing; she came down to the brink completely wrapped in her long thick white cloak, which one of the Mercer maids became useful for once by taking, and the moment that she was in the water the waves all seemed to flow down from her shoulders like the folds of a garment about her, and as she swam away, she was more like a Nereid than a boarder at the Beach House. But I suppose even a Nereid might have had a cramp, or a shark or other sea-monster seize her beautiful foot, or something of the sort; for one morning, as I sat on a rock sketching the bathing scene, there was a cry from Sallie and Charlotte and the rest, but none at all from Marion, who had thrown up her arms and gone under. Arthur Santley was swimming to the spot directly, followed by young Maybank, and almost before one knew it a boat was putting out from shore, when Mr. Raymonde, who had been playing with the children at the other side of the little bathing cove, and had dived at once, now appeared swimming in, with Marion's head over his shoulder; and wading up the sands, he delivered her to the howling maids and Mrs. Mercer, and stalked away to his dressing-room.

Of course Mr. Raymonde was a hero for the rest of the day, though he begged off from some of the worship by declaring that it was nothing to him, for he spent his days rescuing drowning maidens. But Marion was not downstairs. I confess I was a little curious to know what Marion would say to him when they met, or if she would send for him to thank him. But my curiosity was not likely to be gratified, and nobody knew of her sending for him, and after she reappeared she probably said nothing, and they passed and repassed with the customary indifferent inclination.

"I declare," exclaimed Sallie once, as she witnessed the movement, and before Raymonde was really out of hearing, "I don't believe she has ever thanked the man for saving her life!"

"Perhaps she doesn't thank him," said Miss Carmen. "Miss Mercer always acts as if life were a gift not worth the taking."

Still I saw that Marion did not go into the water again without a shudder, and presently ceased to go at all, although she went down to the shore with the rest. She was standing alone at the head of the cove, looking out seaward, not far from my sketching-block, when Raymonde came down one morning, and joined her so unexpectedly that she started.

"Perhaps Miss Carmen's words were true," he said, "and you really do not think life a gift worth thanks."

"Oh no," she answered, quietly. "Life is precious. But I did not think of thanking you for what you could not help doing. I do not suppose you would let a dog drown before your eyes."

"You flatter me," he said, and remained silent; and if after a moment or two either would have said anything more, there was no chance for the scurrying and scampering with which the bathers hurried up the cove, having seen a man-eater, or a sea-serpent, or an old log, or something of the sort riding along its outer reach. But if either had spoken, I made up my mind it would have had to be Raymonde: the solid firmament might crack, but since he had said that he asked nothing more of her, nothing was his portion, for all of Marion. She did *not*

thank him for saving her life, I said to myself; she would rather have died than have owed it to him; and I noticed that although her manner was only a shade less haughtily distant to others, yet her smile would sometimes come when Arthur Santley brought her flowers, and she never refused Mr. Munson the dance or the drive he asked, and was possibly a degree kinder to others if Raymonde were seeing it all, kindness from her in her coldness and her sweetness having the effect to them all of kindness from some young queen. I thought it a little singular that Raymonde did not leave the Beach, but then he had established himself and taken his rooms for the season, and it would perhaps have been absurd to allow himself to be driven away. After all, did it signify? Did he care? A month had passed, and he had hardly glanced at Marion, save once or twice with a furtive sparkle in his eye that seemed to break all his melancholy up in anger.

Yet she was worth looking at; there are few people of such severe clear beauty as hers. I remember her especially one morning, as we were all on the piazza when the old mail-coach came lumbering in from the post-town, five or six miles away. She had been tossing Charlotte's baby, who had clutched her long dusky brown hair and pulled it all about her face, and the coils were streaming down her white gown, and as she looked up, laughing and dimpling, she saw Mr. Raymonde climbing down from the coach box, and such a red shot over her cheeks and through her smile, such a light into her great hazel eyes, as she stood one instant transfixed under his gaze, and then dropped the baby into Charlotte's lap, and moved away so quietly that it seemed to me I had been dreaming, and had not really seen Marion at all, but a vision of her.

It was the same evening that there was shooting in the long meadow, when Marion, coming across the field with Mr. Munson and Sallie, stopped, as they did, at the target one moment, to observe the character of the shots, just as Raymonde—who had come in from the shore with a bag of birds, and looking like a brigand, in his high boots and slouched hat—had been called

and compelled to add his shot to the score, and had just drawn his gun to the shoulder. Maybank shouted to Mr. Munson, and he and his party were hurrying up the field and out of the way, when, like a thunder-bolt from a blue sky, Mr. Raymonde's gun went off. With a single bound, as it seemed, he was by Marion's side.

"Are you hurt?" he cried. "By heavens! There is another ball left for me if you are!"

But Marion, with the same hasty red staining her cheeks for the second time since I had known her, had started back, and conscious that all eyes were on them, laughing, held up the end of the little lock of hair the ball had sheared. "I heard it whistle," she said.

"How tragedy treads on our heels this summer!" exclaimed Sallie.

"But we escape him," said Marion, lightly, and passed on, as Raymonde stepped aside, stooping presently to caress the spaniel that, by jumping on Raymonde as he stood waiting, had been the cause of the possible disaster. There was no more shooting that evening, but I saw who caught and hid the lock of hair the bullet cut away.

Day by day went by, and Marion swept along with the same indifferent beauty, dancing and driving and bowling and rowing and strolling with this one and the other, and never observing Raymonde's existence other than when sometimes that rebellious red again flushed her cheeks, or she laughed more gayly than usual when she felt rather than saw his presence. Meantime all Raymonde's old-time sweetness went; he had neither smiles nor interest for any; he no longer paused to look over my poor sketching-board, with the old pleasant words, although he sometimes caught Charlotte's baby and tossed it in the air, if the nurse went by with it as he sat on the smoking piazza with his cigar. The children missed him in the bathing-cove, and the amateur players in the hall; and the gossipers on the porches were busy with him, you may be sure. But he gave no sign of leaving. I had kept my observations to myself, and, except to think him stony-hearted for being so untouched by the loveliness of the woman whose life

he had saved, and then again so nearly taken, as to make no more advances, I had allowed them as little thought as possible; and no one else ever coupled his name with Marion's, even in thought, I suppose.

Suddenly, in the midst of the pleasuring, we awoke one day to find that there had been a frost; and although, as the sun mounted, it was still warm and genial, everybody felt that summer and pleasuring were at an end. The luggage came down as if it had wings, and the air, so to say, was full of flying trunks. A few, however, yet remained, and among them Mrs. Mercer and her suite, she awaiting her husband and the cluster of more intimate friends. Marion appeared to be in a fever to get away; but Raymondé said to me that he should stay as long as the house was open, for he had always enjoyed the Indian summer by the sea. And he went on painting in the morning, and gunning in the afternoon.

It was the most perfect day,—that last one that he went out, and went, as it chanced, alone. All the distant marshes and woody thickets were blazing with gold and carmine under the softest violet haze, and a silver sheen hung over the sea like a stretch of gauze, behind or through which phantom sails slipped by. For a time we heard the rifle here and there, at least we might have heard it; *I* did; and then there was a pack-peddler with smuggled shawls and laces at the door, and we were so occupied in trying to get something for nothing, with the true feminine instinct, too, in some of us for smuggling, that sunset was on us in no time, its wide blush dying out presently in grayness and mist that before we rose from the tea-table had settled over everything like rain, and through which no star was to be seen.

> "'Rain on the flood, nothing but scud;
> Rain on the ebb, as well go to bed,'"

quoted Mr. Munson. "It's going to be a storm of quality, if that holds good."

It was a gloomy evening, and after the landlady assured us we were going to have the equinoctial, as we should see when the tide turned, and it still rained and blew, and we might then expect a glorious surf, we

went to our rooms early, and were surprised to hear, when we woke next day to find a wild gale blowing with gusts of sleety rain, that Mr. Raymonde had not returned. However, he had undoubtedly found shelter in some hut along the beach, they said; and after the mail-coach, an hour late, came in, we addressed ourselves to our various tasks, having vainly tried to penetrate the thick weather, which hid even the first white line of the breakers. I saw Marion, in her waterproofs, go out for a wrestle with the tempest, which suited her defiant mood; but she was quite powerless in it, and came back, half-blown on her way by the blast, and wet with the flying spray and foam-flakes as well as with the rain. An hour or two later, as one by one of the gentlemen, and of the men about the place, came in and threw off their cloaks and overalls, we found that there had been some uneasiness in the house concerning Mr. Raymonde, which was increasing, and presently that was the one theme of conversation.

It did not need much urging to cause exploring parties to range up and down the shore; and as I did not care a straw for what any one said, I did not hesitate to urge. But by night-fall they had all returned, unsuccessful, and the rain was still lashing the panes, the wind howling round the house, while the roaring and pounding of the surf made it impossible to hear any other sound if one put one's head outside the door. And the storm and darkness did not diminish the anxiety about Mr. Raymonde, when those who knew the region stated that there was no shelter on all the shore, except it should be some casual gunner's tent, and as for that, no tent could have resisted the gale, and the danger was in the marshes, into which he might have wandered in the sudden shutting-down of night and mist, without light of any kind to guide him, and where he might perish with exposure.

Marion had sat calmly at a window of the drawing-room, with her silk knitting, ever since she came in, for we none of us kept our rooms; once she played a part of a sonata, when some one asked for it, and once she took up a book and turned its pages slowly—not too

slowly. By-and-by she laid the book down, and sat there, motionless as a statue, till the dark fell.

"What a gloomy night!" sighed Charlotte. "It will certainly do no harm if we go into the great hall and amuse ourselves."

"And have a drift-wood fire there," cried Marion. "A monstrous one!"

"A drift-wood fire!" echoed I, for I knew where the sun-soaked timbers of the old wreck had been stowed away, and I divined instantly what the light of the great uncurtained hall windows might be to any lost wanderer. When we returned from the tea-table, where Mr. Urquhart, the last arrival, was jesting with Marion quite as if nothing was the matter, although I fancied that repeated motion of her hand across her face was to brush away some trouble, but could not tell if it were anything but fancy, knowing she well deserved to feel the trouble of memories never to be brushed away—when we returned, I say, a fire was crackling and rolling up the big chimney-place, and transfiguring everything in the room with its rosy illumination. Marion sat down in one corner by the heap of old wood, tossing every little while, with her white hands and jewelled fingers, another splinter on the blaze. Young Maybank sat on a hassock at her feet, Arthur Santley leaned over the back of her chair, and kept up the jesting with Urquhart, since the latter would have it, in the pauses of the rather dull game that went on, all in a way that allowed Marion to be silent. She sat erect and strangely still, like one listening for life or death, her only motion being now and then to bend and throw on a billet that sent a shower of sparks up the chimney, and then a great wallowing flame, a sapphire changing to an emerald glory, or burning away in a ruby-red glow of strontium, according to the salts of the sea with which the wood chanced to be saturated. The splendid colors seemed to roll through the windows wide and high, and lay great beams of beauty on the storm, and we imagined the flames to be the risen spirit of the old shipwreck, and as we clustered about the hearth, we fell to telling stories of the dangers of the seas till we could talk of

nothing else. It had come to be past midnight, but nobody thought of sleep; and while they talked, I sat conjuring darker fancies yet; and I wondered, as I remembered his melancholy, if there were any possibility of Raymonde's having sought his own destruction. And glancing over at Marion, I felt assured that she, too, had no other thought. She stooped mechanically, for she was not gazing at the fire, but at the windows, and threw another piece on the blaze, and Santley stooped, too, and heaped an armful there. "The last of the rudder-post," said he. "It was a bad guide once. But such are the metempsychoses of nature, let us hope that it has now become a beacon star!" As the fragments caught the flame and kindled it afresh, the great chimney-place seemed to burst into a gigantic blossom, or as if a holocaust of rainbows took flight up and into outer darkness, and we all exclaimed at the wonder of it—all but Marion; and as I turned to bid her look, I saw her face white even in all that immense ruddy glow and glare, white, and fixed in a terror, while her lips seemed vainly striving to move. And then, in a moment, restraint, doubt, despair, horror, had given place to a wild joy, and she had sprung to her feet with a cry, scattering us to right and left, was throwing up the window and letting in a gust that swept the hall, was stooping to drag in after it something that had just fallen against the sash.

It was Raymonde, who, wandering all night and day in the marsh, had found his bearings at last only when reason was near fled, and the darkness and fog were faintly penetrated by the blaze of the drift-wood fire. As he slowly opened his eyes, she was kneeling on the floor, her arms about him, his head on her breast, her lips warming his frozen lips to life, while Santley and the rest, in their hurry for brandy and hot blankets, forgot even to be amazed. "I had better die now," he whispered, with the smile glorifying his face.

"Oh, no, no, no!" she cried, regardless who heard. "Oh, we have just begun to live!" And I can see Mrs. Mercer's speechless horror and petrifaction at this moment.

All of the characteristics of the true negro are embodied in Roxie and her family, as described by Mrs. A. W. Bissell in this sweet little story. It first appeared in the Hartford *Times*.

ROXIE'S SWEET BOM-BYE.

We used to wonder where or how Roxie first came into existence. She herself said she had been a woman ever since she began to live, and that was all we knew of her past until something happened.

We were a trio of school-girls, and Roxie the old black washerwoman, who had left her adopted town, a few miles away, and come to the Springs to make her fortune by doing laundry work for Miss Fancher's school.

Roxie was not liked by people of her own race at the Springs, who called her "bigity," and she gloried in their estimate of her pride, doing all she could to merit it by switching and strutting and holding a high head when they were about, calling them "ugly as ho'made sin and po' Buckra niggers," leaving them to infer that she had belonged to "quality," although she never gratified the curiosity of anybody by saying so. She made no friends except with us three, and the other girls wondered what we saw in the homely, surly old woman to even tolerate. But Roxie was an interesting character to us, and the mystery she managed to throw about herself had its attraction.

Roxie had literary aspirations, though she did not know a letter of the alphabet, and we were ambitious for her. To the *Lighthouse*, a religious weekly published by a colored clergyman in her adopted town, went many gushing effusions, bearing the name "Roxie Scales." We wondered why she persisted in using this instead of Roxie Friday, her name, and remonstrated with her, arguing that the articles were too good to appear under a pseudonym and she not have the credit; but she was firm.

These articles were on all manner of subjects. The one she seemed most concerned over was written in her house, at her dictation, entitled "A Day in Tennessee." We worked industriously, doing our best, while Roxie criticised right and left, made many flourishes of impatience, and said she didn't believe we had ever heard of Tennessee in our lives. She ordered the best sentences cut out, because they were a little exaggerated, and she was more exacting than was ever Miss Ross, who examined our essays and overlooked grammatical errors purposely made to test her competency.

Now and again, Roxie and her huge flat-iron would make an angry plunge in our direction, but she always stopped before getting too near, with the words, in a modified tone, "Chillen, I'se s'prised at yo' wisdom." She meant our lack of it.

Her house was a mile from the college, in the prettiest, wildest spot about the Springs; and on her front door a card with the words, "This is my busy day," hung from early Monday morning until Saturday night.

On Sundays she would sit at her little parlor organ and sing "Sweet Bom-Bye" to an accompaniment improvised for the occasion. She never varied her song, but the accompaniment was as changeable as the wind.

We three would stand at the window and, with tears in our eyes, peep in upon the lonely old woman, singing her heart out and her breath away, her body swaying, her head in motion, her attitude and voice a desperate appeal to the God the poor soul secretly loved to send that bom-bye, that long-delayed "Sweet Bom-Bye."

Roxie never laughed or smiled. She had forgotten how, she said. Her countenance was the same under all circumstances, even in her stormiest moods.

Having no children of her own, she had taken in, one at a time, the homeless, friendless babies she had heard of, and kept them until they were old enough to earn a living. There was one with her at the Springs, a cunning little pickaninny, and to it "Miss Shiday" was a wonderful woman. Roxie never scolded Beck,

except for loitering on the way to and from the post-office. Beck's instructions had been to remind the absent-minded postmaster, on Saturday, that the *Lighthouse* should be forthcoming, and her daily query, "Any dem *Lighthouse* papers fer Miss Shiday?" came to be a by-word with the patrons.

One day we went to Roxie's, and were somewhat surprised to see an old negro, ragged and tattered, seated on her front steps, his hat beside him, his face in his hands, his whole appearance one of humble misery. His broken sobs fell mournfully upon the quiet air, and even the mocking-birds that always sang in the crooked old apple-trees around the door had been frightened into silence. We went to the little wash-house, expecting to find Roxie over the tubs, up to her elbows in soap-suds, when there she sat on a stool, looking every bit as miserable as did the old fellow on the step.

"What *is* the matter?" we asked.

She took but a feeble notice of our presence, and went on wringing her hands, rocking herself to and fro, and making a little doleful noise that sounded very like the cry of the mourning-doves, which kept up their ceaseless "Ooh, ooh-ooh" back of the college and made us homesick.

"Aunt Roxie, tell us what troubles you," we said. "Can't we help you?"

She reached out her hand in a helpless, entreating way, and we rushed to her and knelt about her, begging her not to cry, for Roxie crying was as pitiable a sight as I ever looked upon.

"Honey," she whispered, "dis ole woman is mighty sor'ful. You see dat ole man on de step?"

"Yes," we answered. "Who is he?"

She did not reply, but continued to moan and stare into vacancy with wide-open, tear-dimmed eyes. Presently she got up, went to the little window, and looked at the old fellow, then came back, murmuring, "It's him, it's him, atter all dese yurs, it's him."

"Roxie," came the plaintive cry, "oh, Roxie!"

She staggered to her feet, then sank down again.

"Dat's somebody whut I uster know," she whispered

cautiously, "bac' in Tenn'see, long 'go. Dat's all, honey."

"Perhaps it is not him," we said, thinking she would rather be brought to believe herself mistaken.

"Dis ole woman's sutten en' sho'," she returned. "Ain't I done toted dem luks in my head all dese yurs? Ever' day I says ter myse'f, 'Dere's a gray ha'r, en' dere's a wrinkle, en' dere's a crooked laig, en' dere's a stoop-ed bac',' en' it's all so. Dat's de same ole nigger I'se been totin' 'roun' in my head en' studyin' over all dese yurs."

She went to the window again, then came back and sat down.

"Tell us about it," we said, "and perhaps we can help you."

"Yuse done done all," she announced, "you brung him hyur, I know."

That was startling; we wanted an explanation.

"Hit wuz dem pieces ter de papers. Dat wuz de reasin I wrote 'em, so's he'd see 'em, en' know I wuz livin' en' doin' well. En' dat's whur Roxie Scales kems in, whut you argified so much over. I wuz a Scales, en' I is a Scales—Friday is a ole med-up name. But I didn't reckin he'd kem trackin' down hyur when I hed de paper sont ter him."

"Why don't you go and speak to him, Roxie? He has come a long distance to see you. Go, Roxie."

"I wudn't speak ter him fer dis yeth," she cried. "Dat's a ole married nigger!"

Roxie was a rigid moralist, but here was something we could not understand.

"Kem sit down," she said at last. "I see I hafter tell ter set my own kerrickter stret. Long 'go I wuz young, en' I b'longed ter a gemman in Tenn'see, so did Jabe. Dat's him out dere. We co'ted en' married, en' wuz so happy; en' bom-by a baby kem. 'Bout dat time we tuk Tumpy, whut didn't hev no mammy, ter raise. She wuz ten den, ten yurs ole. I kin hear dat Tump singin' yit, a-rockin' de crib wid de baby a-squallin' en' her a-pattin' ter drown de yells; en' me a-wukin' in de fiel' close by, long de row, 'side o' Jabe's. Den

Tump wud bring us water in de long han'le gourd, en' I'd drink fust en' Jabe nex'; den Tump wud skeet bac' wid a basket on her head ter keep de br'ilin' hot sun off, en' a-dancin' Juba un'er de shade. We sorter kep' ter ourse'ves, kase Jabe wuz counted lakly; en' we wuked de patches of goobers en' water-milluns by de branch, en' de gyardens, en' de ticklish wuk dat ole mistis wudn't let nobody else tetch. But one day ole mawster went en' died, en' Jabe fell ter de son, Mawse Aleck, en' I fell ter Miss Sallie. En' Miss Sallie she married, en' her man nuver b'lieved in ownin' niggers; but he b'lieved in sellin' 'em, en' puttin' de money fer 'em snug in his pockets. He sol' me, en' I wuz kerried 'way off ter Mis'sippi. I begged him, en' Miss Sallie beg him, but she wuz leetle, en' he wuz big en' domineerin', en' med her pass her cawnsent.

"'Fo' goin' I went ter de crib en' tuk a long luk at dat po' leetle sleepin' baby, whut wudn't soon hev no mammy; en' Jabe wuz cryin' fit ter die, en' Tump wuz yellin' on de do'-step. It wuz wuss'n dyin' stiff-dead, but whut kem 'way atter dat wuz wuss yit. I luked bac' long ez I cud see a sign of de cabin or de smoke, en' 'bout de time I wuz gittin' outer sight I heard de baby cry; en' day cry rung in my head fer yurs en' yurs, en' I hear it yit. It wuz lak it say, 'Kem bac', mammy,' en' I cried en' cried, too; en' when de s'render kem, dat cry med me plod bac' ter ole Tenn'see. I wanted ter see Jabe en' Tump en' all, so I wuked hard en' saved money, den started ter 'em. I wuz happy 'nough on de way bac' ter do me a lifetime.

"When I got ter de ole neighborhood wunst mo', I flew lak I hed wings, I wuz so j'yful. I walked fum de railroad out, fer I'd spent mos' of my change fer presen's fer 'em all. De qua'ters wuz mighty nigh empty, but I see smoke kemin' outer de ole chimbly whut hed been ourn, en' I knowed Jabe wuz dere yit. En' mebby leetle Judy hed got big 'nough ter cook, fer I'd been gawn ten yurs, en' wudn't she be glad ter see her old mammy? I jis' fai'ly flew down dat big road, a-raisin' de dust lak a hoss-drove. I slung dat ca'pet-bag right en' lef', en' strutted prouder'n I did on de bloc'

in Richmon'. I'd been 'maginin' dat baby sayin' 'Mammy, kem bac',' all dis long while, en' who knowed but whut it read'ed-up de house en' cooked now, sayin', 'Mebby mammy 'ill be home terday.'

"I got ter de do' en' a young yaller woman sot in de sunshine a-mendin' britches, but I didn't see no leetle gal flyin' 'round gittin' dinner, en' dat knocked up my cackerlations.

"'Do Jabe Scales live hyur?' I axed de woman, en' she say he do. En' I say, 'I'se de wife dat wuz sol' in slavery.'

"En', chillen, who you reckin dat wuz? It wuz Tump, dat same Tump, growed a sight bigger'n I ever thought she would, but whut you reckin she say? 'Mebby you wuz his wife in slavery,' says she, 'but I'se his wife in freedom, en' Jabe's gawn ter town wid Mawse Aleck's team.'

"I jis' fell flat. De bref wus knocked outer me.

"'Dullaw, ef dis ain't A'nt Roxie!' say she den. En' I say, 'I nuver b'lieved Jabe wud do dat.' You cudn't a-beat it inter my head all day long, ef I wuzn't hyur ter see fer myse'f. Whut med you, Tump?'

"She begin ter cry, en' said dey didn't reckin I'd ever be bac', en' lak ez not I'd married agin too. I luked at her stret. 'Dem ain't my idees of marriage,' says I. 'Whey's my baby, den?' She sorter gasped en' showed de whites of her eyes.

"'It's dade,' she say, en' de news sprawled me flat.

"'Whey is it?' I axed.

"'Dade,' she say again.

"'Whey's its little bones, I'se axin'?'

"Den she p'inted out de place, en' I lef' en' went ter dat leetle grave, whut wuzn't no bigger'n de crib I'd seen it in las', en' fell down 'side it, en' hid my burnin' shame face in its cool green grass; en' 'fo' I got up I heard a snap, en' knowed my heart hed popped in two at las'. It was ter'ble still out in dem woods. De wind jis' move de broomsaidge, en' de pine trees roared 'nough ter mek you feel skeery when yuse way off in a graveyard by yo'se'f. Now'n then a pa'tridge wud whir up, en' mek me jump. All ter wunst I heard

sumpin' lak sumpin' sayin', 'Hurry off!' en' I nuver stopped ter think it out but hurried at wunst.

"So I kem down ter dishyer State, en' nuver let on who I wuz tell now. Dat ole nigger out dere is Jabe Scales, dat Tump's ole man, not mine, en' I ain't gwan hev speech wid him. I'se too puppindicklar ter resk multiplyin' words wid him."

She broke into sobs again, and we went to the window.

"He looks poor and old and forsaken," we said. "Hear him cough! Look at the old hands shake, and his toes are out of his boots. His trousers must have been cut when the water was high, and look at that coat! Poor, dilapidated old man!"

Roxie came and peeped over our shoulders.

"Dasso," she said. "Dat Tump orter patch his duds. He luks lak a skeer-crow, tubbe-sho! When Beck kems, she'll be skeered outer her senses by him. I'se gwan put my scruples in my pocket, en' feed him en' clean him up, an' sen' him bac' ter dat Tump ter show her how ter treat a man. She did put on monstus airs when she say she wuz his wife in freedom, lak freedom wuz de pra'r-book. I ain't nuver called it sich a fine thing ter be a wife in freedom."

She bathed her face, then went out into the yard, singing as mournfully as ever:

> "Dey's a lan' dat is fa'rer den day,
> En' by faith we kin see it far off."

She pretended to see nothing but the clothes on the lines, which she took off, piece by piece, and put into baskets. The old man left the steps and tottered toward her.

"Roxie!" he called, in a tremulous old voice.

"Whut ole man is you?" she asked, turning and looking at him unconcernedly.

"Doan you know me, Roxie?" he said, casting a sheepish, deprecating glance at his rags.

"I guess you ter be some ole man slipped off fum de po'-house," was the cool reply.

"Roxie!"

"Or some ole runaway nigger been hidin' ever sence befo' de wah."

"Now, Roxie!"

"Or some ole ha'nt of a nigger whut de Ku-Klux hung."

"Why, Roxie!'

"Or some ole skeercrow whut got blowed erway, en' lodged down hyur."

"No, I ain't, Roxie, none o' dem. I'se a po', no-'count ole nigger, named Jabe Scales, whut uster live up in Tenn'see, dat you wuz married ter 'way wunst."

"De-laws-a-massy!" exclaimed Roxie. "Ain't you outer yo' min'? Huhkom you got strayed off so fur fum home, den?"

"I kem ter fin' you," he said. "I med s'arch tell I foun' you, Roxie."

Roxie's hand clutched at the clothes-line for support, and she looked away toward the mountains.

"I got dem papers, dem *Lighthouses*, you sent, Roxie, en' Mawse Aleck's leetle boy uster read 'em ter me, en' I'd go off by myse'f en' think over 'em, en' cry; en' at las' I cudn't keep fum kemin' no longer. Tumpy she done dade en' gawn. She nuver tol' me tell de las' dat you wuz back dat time, en' I didn't blame her, kase it wudn't a-he'ped matters none. En' she say, 'Go hunt A'nt Roxie, en' mek it right.' But I ain't axin' you ter marry me over, Roxie. I know yuse lukin' up higher trees fer better berries; but I jis' wanter stay 'roun in hearin' of you. Kin I, Roxie?"

Roxie brought her eyes back from the hill. She looked once at the eager old face, then looked down. Old Jabe leaned heavily on his cane.

"En' Tumpy's dade?" she said at last.

"Two yurs, kem nex' month."

"She done all right by you?"

"She done her bes'," was the reply.

"You didn't miss me, den?"

"Yes, I did, Roxie, but Tumpy sorter kensoled me, en' we talked erbout po' Roxie ever' blessed day."

"Po' Tump! En' whey'd you lay her?"

"'Side o' leetle Judy."

Roxie got exceedingly busy all at once, and pulled the clothes off the line with a vengeance. She tore a lace curtain into fragments in her excitement, then flung it away as if it did not belong to Miss Fancher, and as if Miss Fancher were as amiable as a spring lamb. Old Jabe watched her with fascinated eyes.

"Lemme he'p tote 'em in," he said. Taking up the basket, he carried it to the steps.

"Roxie, it luks home-y 'bout hyur," he said presently. "Doan it, now?"

Roxie's eyes travelled no further than to where the crooked, stooped old man stood, gazing contentedly about him, drinking in the peace and beauty of the hills and valleys and little brooks, not overlooking Roxie's clean yards, big wood-pile, and show on all sides of a modest plenty.

"It do *now*," she answered, softly. "Go buil' on a fire in de kitchen, Jabe, en' le's git supper. En' when dat poke-easy chile of a Beck, whut mus' tek her observations ez she goes 'long, puts in her 'pear'nce, we'll sen' her fer de preacher."

And Roxie began "Sweet Bom-bye," singing so merrily we knew it had come at last, just as Beck, still "kiten' her observations," came over the hill, with a *Lighthouse* under her arm.

The uneasy conscience of the murderer betrays him again, in this ingenious story from *Belgravia*.

THE CLINK OF GOLD.

I.

It was a Winter night. I was sitting over the fire at my chambers in the Middle Temple, and my friend, Frank Bowser, was pacing about the room.

"Arthur," said he, stopping suddenly and tossing a bag of gold toward the ceiling, "I shall soon claim the hand of Alice Darell now."

Again he pitched the bag of gold into the air, and the pieces of money, clinking together, sent forth a low ringing sound.

"Bowser," said I, drawing my arm-chair closer to the fire, "this is a dangerous scheme. It will end in disaster. Take my advice, and don't pursue it further."

In the old college days Bowser had gained a reputation for recklessness, and he had not changed in character since. As I expected, his answer was a laugh.

His inflexibility irritated me.

"Can you not realize," I exclaimed, "what a risk you are running? You go out nearly every night on this strange search. You take no precaution that I know of. The day must come, though I dread to think of it, when you will be robbed and probably murdered."

"Murdered?" said Bowser, laughing, and still tossing his gold. "How nervous you are to-night? Nonsense! my plan will succeed. I am hunting about the docks at Limehouse now; and if you only knew what a discovery—— Halloo! who's that?"

It was a muffled, mysterious-sounding knock at the outer door.

"It's Scroggie," said I, jumping up. "Old Scroggie!"

"Ah! Scroggie, is it?" said Bowser. "Ah!"

A change crossed his face, I thought. But possibly

I was mistaken, for there was no light in the room except a shaded lamp and the uncertain flicker of the fire, which threw shadows upon our faces as well as upon the dark panelled walls.

I went out to admit my visitor. As I walked along the passage, I could hear the ring of Bowser's gold; I felt a chill pass over me, and I shuddered.

"Alone!" said Scroggie in a low voice as I opened the door.

"Come in!" I said; "come in. It's only Bowser."

He hesitated, with his hands deep in his pockets. Then he hugged himself, as if suffering from cold, and said:

"No. I'll look in later——"

"Not you," said I, taking him playfully by the coat collar (we were familiar in our manners toward each other). "Not you! I'm going to give Bowser a lecture, and I want an audience. So come, and take the chair."

As I still held him by the collar, and refused to release him, Scroggie, after a slight resistance, yielded to persuasion. So I shut out the cold air on the staircase and led the way into my cosy room.

"Good-evening," said Bowser, throwing up his bag and catching it. "Good-evening, Scroggie. I'm practising at a little game. You'll excuse me. Our friend Field," he added, turning to me—"our friend Field will tell you all about it. It's music to me. Sweet music."

"I hate the sound of gold," said Scroggie, seating himself beside the fire with another hug, and turning his back on Bowser. "It reminds me of the diggings. And at 'Frisco I used to hear that clinking all day long. I hate it."

He spoke in a low voice, with his eyes fixed resentfully on the bright coals.

My old schoolfellow Scroggie was one of the strangest characters I ever met. Nobody knew where he lived, or how. Nobody saw him in the streets until after dark, and then he was usually walking at a quick pace, with a slouching swing about the shoulders which distinguished him even in dark streets or in a crowded

thoroughfare. He wore a low felt hat, and at all times and in all seasons a thick rough overcoat, buttoned tightly about his neck, giving him more the appearance of a sailor than of a landsman. He had, in fact, since our school days, passed most of his time upon the sea; at least, so I gathered from his conversation. For many a night we had sat together over the fire in these chambers while he recounted to me the shipwrecks and other perils and dangers he had experienced. He had a quick, bright eye, a red beard, which he had a habit of sometimes stroking with his small, nervous hand when he talked. His hair, thick and curly, always looked to me as if defying a brush and comb, and his coat had invariably that dusty appearance so suggestive of the wearer having tramped over country roads. Why I had resumed my acquaintance with this man—having met him accidentally in the streets some two or three years ago—and why I at once became as intimate with him as I had been in our school days, is a mystery in human nature which I will not attempt to solve. He was amusing, which may account for a good deal, and I had known him at school to belong to a good family, though I remember his education had been much neglected. It was of little consequence to me that he was peculiar in his dress and manner, for we never met, except on rare occasions, in any other place than my chambers.

"Now, Bowser," said I, when I had mixed a glass of whiskey for Scroggie, and had resumed my seat by the fire—"Now, Bowser, put that bag of gold into your pocket and listen to me. I am going to explain your scheme to Scroggie, and show him how very unsatisfactory I consider your conduct. Now, Bowser, for goodness' sake, sit down."

Bowser bestowed upon me a half-amused, half-impatient glance, and, giving his bag a parting toss, dropped it into his pocket, and sat down away from the fire, in the shade, beyond the reading-lamp, and with his arms folded on the table. He was a large, powerful man, and I remember thinking how gigantic his shoulders looked in that semi-darkness, as he leaned forward to listen.

"The facts of the case," said I, "the facts of the case are somewhat as follows. My learned friend has fallen in love, if I am not mistaken——"

Bowser nodded.

"Has fallen in love with a young lady named Darell——" I thought Scroggie had spoken. He had started and muttered something beyond doubt when I mentioned the name of Darell.

"Nothing," said Scroggie, returning with a quick glance the inquiring look which I gave him.

"And, moreover," I then resumed, "if I am not mistaken, my learned friend and Miss Darell are engaged."

Again Bowser nodded.

"But," I said—"but there is a clause in the engagement. Miss Darell has lost her father, who met his death under circumstances of a very painful nature. In a word, Miss Darell's father was murdered."

At this moment I happened to be looking straight at Scroggie, and a dark shadow seemed to gather over his face. The expression startled me and vanished.

"Stay!" said Bowser as I was about to continue. "Let me tell the story as I heard it from Alice Darell."

I said, "By all means;" and leaning back in my chair, I waited for Bowser to proceed.

"Miss Darell's father," said Frank Bowser, "was chief cashier at a bank in a large market town in the north of England. He lived on the premises, and his daughter Alice lived with him. His position was an arduous one. He was frequently engaged over the cash, or in examining the ledgers, until late into the night; especially on evenings preceding market days. It was part of his duty to weigh, or count over and check off in the bullion-book, the various bags of gold, large and small, before they were handed over, or distributed among the cashiers. And so, night after night, the clink of gold might be heard in the iron room, beyond the back parlor; for night after night Mr. Darell sat there weighing the gold in the scales, or counting it, or shovelling it into the bags—clink, clink, clink."

Here Bowser paused, and, taking his own bag of gold out of his pocket, placed it on the table before him.

Scroggie was sitting in an attentive attitude; but his eyes were never raised from the fire; and a worn look, which I had not observed at first, had settled upon his face. Bowser moved nearer toward us, coming within the circle of light under the lamp; and, emptying out of his bag a quantity of bright sovereigns, he continued in an impressive voice:

"One night," he told us—"one night, between 11 and 12 o'clock, the cashier is seated in the iron room under a shaded lamp—as I am seated now—weighing the gold as usual and filling the bags, one after another, entering them in the bullion-book, tying them up, and casting them aside. He is deeply engrossed in his occupation. Is he thinking—this honest, industrious cashier—is he thinking, as he looks upon this glitter and listens to the clinking and ringing of this gold, what a hateful thing money is? Or—who shall say?—who shall say but what—with a desire for his daughter's happiness passing through his mind—who shall say but what, for her sake, he is wishing that the sovereigns were his own? He is working, working now, solely for her, and if he is dreaming of riches, what more natural on earth? But, whatever his thoughts may be, he is so absorbed that he hears no cat-like footstep moving stealthily toward the spot where he weighs the gold—clink, clink, clink—he sees no shadow cross the light in the outer room, within a short distance of where he stands; he hears nothing, observes nothing, until an arm is uplifted swiftly behind him, and a stifled cry escapes him—no time for more. He falls, beaten and crushed by a heavy blow. What's happened? A murder! committed in the dead of night."

When Bowser had uttered these words there was a silence between us for some minutes; Scroggie was the first even to move in his chair. I had refilled his glass during the last pause in the narrative, and he now stretched out his hand hastily and lifted the tumbler to his lips and drank it off as if it were water. His hand shook violently as he placed the empty glass on the

mantelshelf. I had often seen his hand tremble; indeed it was seldom quite steady; but he had never exhibited excessive nervousness before.

"Well," said he, without looking round.

"There is not much more to tell," said Bowser. "It was evidently a collusion between the bank porter and a sailor—or at least a man that looked very like one—seen loitering about, in the neighborhood of a public house, on the night previous to the one on which this tragedy occurred. The porter was arrested, tried, and sentenced to penal servitude for life."

"And the sailor?" said Scroggie.

"Escaped. He made off with bags containing a large sum of gold, and he has never been heard of since."

With these words Bowser rose from his seat and began to pace up and down the room, playing with his bag of gold in an excited manner.

"Yes," said he, presently, "the murderer escaped. But I have sworn to solve this mystery as to who is the murderer of her father before I marry Alice Darell. That is the clause in our engagement. If the villain is alive I will ferret him out, hunt him down, and bring him to justice. For I love Alice Darell more than my life, and for her I would run any risk. Mr. Darell was my friend. I honored him as much as if he had been my own father."

He stopped, glanced around the room with a savage energy expressed in his face, and then, flinging up the bag of sovereigns defiantly, he cried: "But the clink of gold will some day awaken the evil conscience! The man who has committed this crime will betray himself at last. His guilt will be branded on his face, like an ugly scar, when he hears the sound—clink, clink, clink! There is no escape. The conscience is stronger than the man!"

Again Bowser tossed up the bag of gold, and paced the room, more excited than ever.

"My dear Bowser," I exclaimed, "for heaven's sake be rational! To visit, as you do, the lowest haunts in London, to mix among savages—for some of these men in the East End are nothing better—is to expose your-

self to real dangers. These sailors know the sound of gold only too well. Some night you will, I again warn you, be robbed and murdered. And that," I added, "that will scarcely be agreeable news for me to carry to Alice Darell. Once more let me seriously advise you to abandon this scheme. And Scroggie," I added —"Scroggie will, I know, support me in my appeal."

"Abandon it?" said Bowser, as he walked toward the door. "Why, I've already taken two or three sharp detectives into my confidence. Good-night! I'm going to meet one now."

As he went down the passage, I heard the clink, clink of his bag of gold; and it seemed expressive of his contempt for my opinion; and when he had slammed the outer door of the chambers and his footsteps on the staircase had died away, the sound was still ringing in my ears.

II.

No sooner had Frank Bowser gone than Scroggie's whole manner changed. His face grew cheerful, and his voice again sounded natural and pleasing.

"Does Bowser entertain you in this musical style every night?" said Scroggie, with a laugh.

"Yes," said I, stirring the fire into a blaze. "It's a habit which seems to have become a necessary part of his existence. As you or I may derive pleasure, for example, from a quaint thought, so Bowser derives pleasure from the sound of gold. In fact he fancies that he does not deserve to gain Alice Darell's whole heart until he has succeeded in clearing up the mystery as to who murdered her father. It is a strange mistake. I know Miss Darell well, and, although I have never mentioned this subject to her, I am convinced that she would be the first to dissuade him. Indeed, I have no doubt she has done so already, if she knows anything about his scheme."

"Frank Bowser is mad," said Scroggie.

"To-morrow evening," said I, "Miss Pilkington—an aunt with whom Miss Darell is living—expects me to afternoon tea. I shall go early, and, before Bowser

arrives, try to learn what they know about the matter. I shudder when I think what may happen."

"Then don't think," said Scroggie. "Let us change the subject."

"You're right," said I, rising from my seat, and standing with my back to the fire, and looking round the room. "You're right. Let's change the subject."

Scroggie had also risen and had glanced at the sideboard, and then at the book-case.

"I suppose," said he, turning over the leaves of a volume—"I suppose you haven't dined. Have you?"

So well did I know Scroggie's character that I was at once convinced by the manner in which he put this question that he had not dined. When, or where, in fact, he ate anything was another problem, as deep as the one as to when or where he slept. I had often thought—when trying to puzzle out the life, since our school days, of this strange individual—that he never slept anywhere or ate anything except within my chambers. He was always supernaturally hungry—though, to do him justice, he adopted all the gentlemanly devices which he could invent in order to conceal his voracity.

Of course, I declared that I had had nothing to eat worth mentioning since the morning, though, in truth, I had dined sumptuously at the "Old Cock" tavern with Frank Bowser at 5 o'clock. But it was now nearly 11, and I did not doubt that I should be able to do justice to the savory pie and the pickles and other luxuries placed by Mrs. Billings, my laundress, that afternoon in my cupboard.

The gusto with which Scroggie spread the cloth and arranged the table, while I went on a foraging expedition into gloomy recesses, in search of provisions, would have given an edge to any man's appetite. We had forgotten in five minutes all about Frank Bowser and the sound of gold. The fire was burning brightly and the reading lamp, which usually cast its light on my law books about this hour, was throwing a glow upon our festive board. Scroggie's activity was bewildering. No sooner had he uncorked a bottle of beer than off

he went to refill the kettle; so that we might be prepared to mix hot whiskey by and by. At last we settled down at the table; and Scroggie began to roll a cigarette, as though the idea of eating anything had never entered his head. The temptation, however, which the pie held out was too great to be long resisted.

"I can't help thinking, Field," said he, when he had partially appeased a very keen appetite—"I can't help thinking that you're an uncommonly lucky fellow."

"Possibly," said I. "But few men, you know, consider themselves lucky."

Scroggie glanced round the room, and I could see by the nervous manner in which he was rolling a fresh cigarette that he had something on his mind which he wished to communicate. "Uncommonly lucky," he went on thoughtfully; "a cosy set of chambers, a warm fire, an easy chair, a reference library—all complete! Not much inducement, under the circumstances, to leave England. Now, have you?"

I had returned to my arm-chair and had lit my pipe. I answered, with my eyes on the fire, where pictures rose up among the red and rugged coals:

"A tour through France, Switzerland, and Italy is a pleasure which I'm looking forward to. At present I can't afford it."

"No?" said Scroggie, quickly, and in a tone of concern, though whether for me or for himself I could not decide. His voice and his manner puzzled me. I fancied at first that he contemplated borrowing money, but I quickly dismissed the thought, for he had never hinted to me that he was needy; and although he had no scruples about sharing my supper or passing a night upon my sofa, I believed that he would have starved rather than borrow a sou. We never spoke to each other of our private affairs; but since Scroggie had referred to my cosy chambers I was constrained to say something by way of apology for being in possession of such a luxury.

"As you know," said I—"as you know, I'm only a briefless barrister. I inherited these books and this furniture from my grandfather. He lived in these

rooms, and I came into possession when he died. My literary work pays for bread and cheese. When a 'foreign correspondent' is wanted, away I shall go, with a light valise on my shoulders and a walking-stick in my hand."

Scroggie looked still more thoughtful. Presently he said: "And when you arrive, after a long day's journey, at your hotel, you will sleep soundly, with no troubles in the past."

"Not many."

"With no anxieties about the future, except such as give zest to life, and awaken ambition."

I laughed, and said that I liked the picture.

"And when," continued Scroggie—"and when you have grown tired of travelling, and you turn your face toward home, how pleasant to know that a snug set of chambers——"

"And that laundress of mine will be waiting to receive me!" I said, with a smile. "But," I added, "talking of Mrs. Billings, I now propose that we mix the whiskey."

Scroggie was, I feared, becoming sentimental; so I made this suggestion in order to revive his spirits.

But the whiskey did not altogether have the desired effect. He sat silent for some time, looking sternly at the fire, and the same worn expression came over his face which I observed when Frank Bowser was recounting the murder of Mr. Darell.

"Field," said he at last, without changing his attitude—"Field, old fellow, for more than two years I have been living in London, and almost on my arrival I began to receive hospitality from you. You gave me a hearty welcome when we met, and ever since I have been 'dropping' in here, and, I am afraid, wasting valuable time."

I assured him—how could I do otherwise?—that he had never wasted an hour.

"Well," said he, doubtfully, "I hope not. However, it will end to-night. I'm going to travel."

I expressed astonishment; though nothing could have surprised me less.

"Yes I am going to travel," he repeated; "and although it was my intention to have started, without mentioning the matter even to you, somehow, after all your kindness, I thought perhaps if I did, it might have created a wrong impression. I wished to thank—I wished to—to——Yes. I'm going to travel."

"America?" I suggested.

"That depends," he replied, quickly—"that depends on circumstances. I'm waiting for a—for instructions. Anyhow," he added, "I'm going to travel."

Now that he had relieved his mind of the confession, he began to grow drowsy, and frequently nodded at the fire, as though he were bidding it adieu. But as soon as he fell into a doze, he would get a start, and gaze about him with a frightened look in his eyes; then, as soon as he caught a glimpse of me, quietly smoking my pipe, he would smile, mutter "All right," and go off into another doze.

"You're tired," said I, at a moment when I thought he appeared to be looking in my direction.

"I'm going," was his reply, shutting his eyes and again nodding at the fire, "to travel."

"Not to-night!"

He started up suddenly, with a cry upon his lips.

"What?"

"I asked you if you were tired?" said I.

"Tired? No. Was I dreaming?"

"Yes," said I. "Won't you lie down?"

"Well," he answered, looking toward the sofa sleepily, "if you've no objection. Yes, I think I will for five minutes. I shall be all right in five minutes. Eh?"

He always said "five minutes," but his sleep usually lasted over the night, and often far into the day that followed. He pulled off his coat, threw my rug over his shoulders, and lay down.

"I say, Field, old fellow," said he, in a scarcely audible tone, as he turned his weary face to the wall, "what a hospitable—old chap—you are. I say—dear boy—I'm—going—to—trav——"

Then I heard his heavy breathing, and knew that he was fast asleep.

How long I sat in my arm-chair, before the fire, after Scroggie had fallen asleep I do not know; but hours must have passed before the incident occurred which I am now about to relate. I felt no inclination to retire to bed; and in this wakeful mood many strange fancies took possession of me; and the most strange of them all was that a sound like the clink of gold was ringing in my brain. I could not dismiss it; it kept my thoughts constantly fixed upon Frank Bowser, until I became absolutely haunted by scenes in which I imagined that he formed a central figure: scenes on the docks; in noisy taverns and dark streets, where men lurked about with villanous looks, until at last the river and its mysteries rose up before me and I became troubled with a presentiment that some harm had befallen my friend; for when the sound of a footstep echoed in the court below my windows or a heavy tread on the staircase outside reached my ear, I feared it was a messenger who had come to confirm what was passing in my mind.

In this nervous, dreamy condition my thoughts became so completely separated from my immediate surroundings that when, with a suddenness that appalled me, the dead silence of the night was disturbed by a prolonged and dreadful shout, my heart seemed to have ceased to beat and my limbs to be paralyzed with terror. The impulse was strong within me to spring to my feet. But although my brain was remarkably active, strange to say my body was dead to all sense of volition. Yet, although I could not move my head, objects which passed within the limits of my vision were not even clouded, but distinctly defined; and there I saw, with the pale and haggard face of one who is haunted, my old school-fellow Scroggie. His eyes were wide open, and seemed to express an irresistible fascination for some beckoning spirit. Presently he spoke in whispers, as though addressing this phantom of his brain, but in a voice so low that not a word reached my ear. At last he looked about as though the shadow had vanished; though his breath fell more quickly from his lips, and his right arm now stiffened from the shoulder, and he grasped, in fancy, some heavy

weapon which he was handling with a look of dogged energy and resolution; his face had changed into the expression of a demon, dark as night; and he seemed to be groping his way, as if blind, and stopping in a listening attitude, and then groping on again; but with one over-mastering purpose.

Suddenly he raised his arm; and, with his imaginary weapon, aimed at the air a blow so full of concentrated force that he staggered under it, uttered a low cry, and fell heavily to the ground.

Then and only then, the power to move came back to me, and I sprang to his assistance. He was lying on his back, gasping; he had become as black in the face as if he had been transformed into a veritable demon. With great difficulty I succeeded in loosening his collar; each moment, it seemed to me, must be his last.

I raised him from the floor and placed him on the sofa, and slowly signs of consciousness returned. After staring around the room in a strange, bewildered fashion, his eyes settled upon my face.

"Are you all right now?"

He put his hand to his forehead, and a look of pain passed over his face such as I shall never forget.

"All right," said he, "all right. It was only a dream."

Then he again turned his weary face toward the wall, muttering, "only a dream"; and then he again fell asleep.

At this moment the flame of the reading lamp fluttered, like a heart, and expired, and I was left in darkness. The fire had burned out, and the midnight air had a ghostly chill in it as it touched my cheek; and my pulse, beating loudly, sounded in my ear like ghostly whisperings that seemed to warn me that I was alone in my chambers with the man who had murdered the father of Alice Darell.

III.

When I had found my way into the bed-room, and had struck a light, I formed a resolution to act promptly as soon as morning dawned. I drew back the curtain from the window, and looked out into the night.

My chambers were a top "set," facing the Thames; and the bed was so adjusted that, when lying down upon it, my face was turned toward the southeast; and there in the black horizon, for not a star was visible —with the dark river flowing below—the first reflection of sunrise must, I knew, meet my eyes.

Never did man look out into the night more keenly; never did a sailor, wrecked at sea, watch more anxiously than I watched for morning. If I raised my head from the pillow once and strained my eyes, until they ached, I must have done so dozens of times.

I had thrown myself upon the bed in my dressing-gown, ready to carry out my plan of action. At last, as though moved by a breeze, I saw a faint glimmer breaking beneath the blackness. At the same time, with that strange confidence which one places in the will at its weakest moments, I closed my eyes and waited; and so I fell into a sleep against which I had struggled successfully for hours, and which I cannot even now look back upon without a pang, for much of the trouble which soon followed might have been averted, I have little doubt, if I had kept wakeful and watched.

I soon began to dream that some one was knocking at the door—a knocking which seemed to continue for hours, when suddenly I opened my eyes and found myself in broad daylight.

As the knocking still went on, I sprang up and exclaimed: "Who's there?"

"Only me, Sir."

It was the voice of my laundress, Mrs. Billings.

"Why, what's the time?"

"Struck 3, Sir, if you'll believe me."

I opened the door and glanced quickly toward the sofa.

Scroggie had vanished!

"Where is Mr. Scroggie?" said I.

"Gone, Sir; hours ago," said Mrs. Billings. "Says he, Sir, 'Don't disturb Mr. Field.' Them was his words. Says he, Sir, 'Mr. Field ain't well.' And, says he——"

"What time did he go?"

"Mr. Scroggie?" said my laundress, meditatively. "When I comes into the rooms, Sir, he jumps up, and goes out. If you'll believe me."

When I had given Mrs. Billings any reason to suppose that I doubted her word I could never discover, but she seldom answered any question I put without taking the precaution to add, "if you'll believe me," as if her principal ambition was to establish confidence in her statements.

"Do you know if Mr. Bowser is in?"

Mrs. Billings gave me a smile through the black patches on her red face and said:

"Lor', Sir, Mr. Bowser went out early, too."

"But he may have returned."

Again my laundress smiled, and this time as if there was some fear that I was losing confidence. She placed her head on one side and looked at me thoughtfully out of her fishy eyes, while I took a glance at her bonnet, which never failed to interest me; it was crushed and neglected, as usual, and looked as if it had been long forgotten in the midst of domestic affairs of more immediate importance.

"No, Sir; he ain't returned," said Mrs. Billings. "I was in his rooms not five minutes ago. If you'll believe me."

I now remembered my engagement to take tea with Miss Pilkington and Alice Darell; and it occurred to me as not improbable that Frank Bowser had already gone to Guilford Street, where they lived. It was nearly 4 o'clock, so I hastened to make my toilet.

As I drove to Miss Pilkington's, meditating over Bowser's scheme to awaken a guilty conscience with the clink of gold, a thought which had hitherto only taken shadowy form in my mind now took a shape. I became convinced that Bowser suspected Scroggie, and Scroggie was the man he was hunting down.

When his suspicions had been first evoked it was impossible for me to determine. The men had met frequently for a year or more at my chambers, and yet it was only within the last few weeks that Bowser had

invented the plan of clinking his gold; he had never told me that the scheme had been suggested by Scroggie's remarks or manner, and yet this now seemed to be the only possible explanation. But what seemed most certain was that he had been intentionally concealing these suspicions from me.

The necessity for seeing Bowser concerning this strange affair appeared every moment more urgent. Yet, as the cab drew up at Miss Pilkington's door, I felt unnerved and disinclined to meet him. His conduct required some explanation. He had not, I thought, behaved to me like a friend.

Miss Pilkington's house in Guilford Street had an old-fashioned appearance of comfort which was exceedingly inviting. Passing through the snug entrance-hall, where a strong inner door seemed to be holding all draughts at defiance, and up a softly carpeted staircase, I was shown into a room in which the air was as warm and pleasant as a well-ventilated conservatory; and here I found Miss Pilkington, sitting in an arm-chair, near the fire, wrapped up as if she were some rare exotic.

Alice Darell came forward to welcome me in that unaffected manner in which she received all Frank Bowser's friends.

"And where is Mr. Bowser?" said Miss Pilkington.

Alice seconded the question with her large, dark, inquiring eyes.

I said I had not seen Frank Bowser since the previous evening, and that I had expected to find him already here.

"He is not ill?" said Alice.

My face must have expressed anxiety, for Alice Darell gave me a quick, searching look which I had difficulty in meeting without betraying my thoughts.

"No," said I. "Why should you think that?"

"I don't know," said she, twisting her engagement ring nervously round her finger. "But I'm sure you are concealing something."

"Nonsense, child," said Miss Pilkington, straightening her back—"nonsense. Make the tea."

And the "exotic" aunt glanced from Alice to the tea-tray which stood on a side-table near her chair. Miss Pilkington prided herself upon her punctuality in all her domestic arrangements.

"Won't you wait a little while for Frank?" said Alice.

"Certainly not," said Miss Pilkington, forcing out the words in an exhausted voice.

Alice pouted her pretty lips and tears came into her eyes, as she rose from her seat.

If I now could have dismissed from my mind the extraordinary events of the previous evening, Frank Bowser's absence would not have given me further concern. But that midnight scene with Scroggie was constantly recurring, and the remarkable contrast between this quiet domestic hearth and my own dreaded thoughts seemed to give an undue importance to the situation. The most trifling events became connected in my mind with this one relating to Scroggie. I believed that the darkest deeds were being enacted while I sat idly here. Miss Pilkington's kettle singing on the hob suggested artificial gayety. Miss Pilkington's cat, lying on the rug at my feet, had never seemed to look into the fire so seriously before—it reminded me of Scroggie sitting over mine last night. And when Miss Pilkington presently began to pour out the tea in her dignified fashion, and then proceeded with a still greater air of grandeur to extinguish the tea-pot with a suffocating "cozy," some tragedy appeared close at hand.

To escape as soon as possible from this disturbing domestic calm seemed to me a grave necessity. It was impossible for me to consult with these ladies now concerning this scheme of Bowser's. Without loss of time Scroggie's arrest must be effected. This was my duty, and Frank Bowser, I had reason to conjecture, could aid me. Yet I knew, unless I took my leave with considerable tact, that I should cause Alice Darell great anxiety. For she sat reading my thoughts.

I therefore passed another half-hour, in a state of mental agony, conversing on trivial subjects with Miss Pilkington over cups of tea; and when I rose, and held out my hand, she said in a lofty manner:

"Tell Mr. Bowser, when you see him, that I like punctuality. I have been accustomed to it, in India, all my life. Good-evening."

I had scarcely reached the first landing when I was arrested by hearing Alice Darell's voice.

"Stay one moment, please!" said Alice, as she descended the staircase, and stood looking up beseechingly into my face. "I must hear the truth. If anything has happened to Frank, do not conceal it from me."

I no longer doubted that she knew of his mad scheme, and disapproved of it strongly.

"Nothing has happened," said I, "that I know of."

"But you have some reason to be so anxious?"

"Yes," I said. "It's no use trying to hide that from you."

"Where is he to-night?"

"I cannot tell you. I am going to look for him now."

Alice glanced up the stairs and then into my face distractedly.

"I wish I could come, too."

I took her hand and said:

"Trust me, Alice; I will find him. It is cruel to give you so much anxiety."

She kept hold of my hand for a while as though it linked her to her lover; and then she gave me a grateful smile, released my hand, and allowed me to leave her without another word.

I glanced back when I reached the hall. She still stood motionless on the staircase where I had left her, with her hands clasped and her eyes bent thoughtfully to the ground.

IV.

As soon as I reached the street, I sprang into a cab which was passing, and drove back to the Temple. If I had been released from prison I could not have experienced a greater sense of freedom, though the position of affairs appeared no less serious—far from that. But I seemed to have thrown off heavy fetters and to be grappling with the situation now in good earnest.

First I stepped across to Bowser's chambers; but as

I ascended the staircase, I saw, with a sinking hope, that his outer door was closed, a sure sign that he was not there. Nevertheless, I knocked loudly, but I received no answer.

Next I went to my own rooms. I searched in my box for letters. There were several, but not a line from Frank.

I stood for some minutes meditating over what course I should now pursue.

Suddenly I remembered Frank Bowser's words: "I'm hunting about near the docks at Limehouse."

It seemed like a voice, and I was eager to start.

Having put on a thicker coat, and selected a heavy walking-stick, I hastened out again into the night and turned my steps toward Limehouse.

When I reached the railway terminus, near Fenchurch Street, I was told that a train would start for the docks in a few minutes, and as I hurried up the staircase, it came slowly into the station.

A journey across the tops of houses and through smoke issuing from a forest of chimneys is not, at the best of seasons, calculated to awake cheerful thoughts. To me—glancing out of the window at this dismal prospect, or what glimpses were visible in the dark night—the effect was so depressing that I again became troubled with melancholy forebodings; and yet as we tore along toward the docks these forebodings developed into no distinct fear in my mind. They were shadowy, like the housetops and the smoking forest of chimneys; they conveyed no meaning beyond a general sense of gloom.

Limehouse was reached at last. Turning down the street to the left after leaving the station, I walked quickly along in the direction which leads through narrow ways and over iron bridges into the Old Ferry road. It was my intention, when I got there, to make inquiries at the police station concerning Frank Bowser, for he had mentioned having taken detectives into his confidence; and there, I thought, I should be most likely to gain information about him.

The way was straight and sufficiently well lighted

until I came to the Bridge road. But here the great dock-walls, like the walls of a prison, rose up on each side, and the lamps were dim and far apart, and as I hurried along, not a person passed me on the way.

I had walked some distance along this dark roadway, sometimes gaining a glimpse of the canal, or of a wharf, as I crossed a bridge, but always coming again into the shadow of these high walls, when suddenly I saw, in this dim light, a solitary figure approaching—a figure with a slouching swing about the shoulders, which made my heart beat quickly. Walking with a hurried step, this figure soon became more distinct, and in another minute I had recognized the face.

But as the figure passed by, I could find no voice. If a sound had escaped my lips, it must have been a cry of horror. As I had seen the face of Scroggie on the preceding night, so I had seen it now, pale and haggard, with the eyes of a hunted animal, dead-beaten, and nearly brought to bay. But there was something more than that; there was an indescribable expression of some fresh crime committed, overshadowing him, and he seemed to be groping his way, like a man who is eager to avert his own destruction. So he went by, and not a word, or a look, was exchanged between us. So he passed into the darkness and out of sight.

Voices now reached me from the direction in which Scroggie had come, and I ran on, for I fancied that I recognized Frank Bowser's voice among them.

As I came in sight of the Old Ferry road, some one stepped abruptly in my path and turned the light of a dark lantern full in my face. It was a constable, who eyed me with evident suspicion.

When I mentioned Bowser's name, and told him who I was, the man appeared satisfied, for he said, "Come this way," and, making a beckoning motion with his lantern, walked down the road. Something in his manner suggested a dreadful thought; a question was on my lips, but I feared to ask it, and followed him in silence.

At a corner of the road we found another constable.

He came forward, as we approached, and turned his lantern upon me as the other had done.

"Friend of his," said my conductor, introducing me; "friend from the Temple."

"Right," said the other, in a snapping manner.

I now observed a third lantern flashing about down a dark turning, which appeared to lead to some entrance into the docks, for there was the shadow of a gateway beyond.

The man I had first met again beckoned with his bull's-eye, and led me toward this gate, while the other remained stationed as though on the watch.

I groped along after the bull's-eye under a high wooden fence, on the other side of which I saw the dim outlines of the masts and rigging of a large vessel. At the further end of this fence, near the gateway, three men were bending down; and one of them, apparently a surgeon, was bandaging the head of a person who was being supported by the others.

The constable who had conducted me to this spot now gave me a quick look as he threw the light from his dark lantern upon a death-like face.

A cry escaped me; it was Frank Bowser.

He uttered my name in a faint voice when I leaned over him.

"Tell her," said he, speaking so low that I could scarcely hear the words—"tell her that my scheme succeeded. What I said I would do, tell her, I have now done. I have found the man. I have hunted him down. Tell her—"

No further words reached my ear; his lips still moved, but unconsciousness quickly followed.

Many days passed before he spoke again.

He then told me—as he lay upon the sofa in my chambers, with Alice Darell seated beside him and Miss Pilkington near the fire, in an arm-chair, looking very stern—he then told me how he happened accidentally one day to be clinking some gold in his pocket, in Scroggie's presence, when he noticed that a strange look came over his face, which roused his suspicions;

and he then and there determined to adopt this plan, and thoroughly satisfy himself before giving the affair more serious thought. He acknowledged his fault in omitting to take me into his confidence; but he did not wish to destroy my belief in Scroggie without a stronger proof. Upon the eventful night on which he related the details connected with the bank tragedy his suspicions had been confirmed. He had gone to Limehouse, where Scroggie was known to the police, and where, it was supposed, he lived; and a warrant had actually been granted for his arrest. That evening—as Bowser supposed—Scroggie must have followed him; and there, near the gateway, had nearly succeeded in his evident design to take his life.

It will be remembered that Scroggie had told me in confidence that he was "going to travel." Whether the dreadful meaning which has ever since attached itself in my mind to his words passed through his brain when he uttered them can never be known. He was found drowned in one of the dock basins, at Limehouse, upon the day following his attempt upon the life of Frank Bowser.

These incidents which I have related occurred some time ago, and Frank has been married for years to Alice Darell: but every detail must remain fresh in my memory as long as I live.

The folly of suicide was never more wittily illustrated than in this brilliant little satire by Paul Parfait, translated from the French for ROMANCE by Pauline Shackleford Colyar.

MY SUICIDE.

YES, I have wished to die.

It was just after receiving the assurance that Amélie was false to me.

Was it, indeed, Amélie—this perfidious coquette? Only think of it. She held my life in her little hand, and I am not now even sure of her name. Young men, this may astonish you, but you will learn better in time.

I was young then—quite young, and I no sooner learned of my misfortune than I determined to end my life. My first intention was to shoot myself on her stairway, but I bethought me of the crowds that would see me there, and of how Henriette—was not that her name? —would ridicule me, so my *amour propre* came to my rescue.

"No," I said to myself, "there must be no excitement, no noise. The wounded bird conceals himself behind a tuft of grass. Thus I wish to die—in some corner—isolated, lost, forgotten."

In this elegiac frame of mind I took the five-thirty train for Melun. It deposited me at dusk, about one hundred steps from the Golden Lion—a well-kept hotel, with airy rooms, good beds, and an excellent table.

"What does Monsieur wish?" asked a little waitress, whom I have since found to be very pretty.

"Nothing."

I was not hungry. I went to bed. My sleep was fitful, and every instant I thought I saw Victorine—I believe her name was Victorine—pass by on the arm of my rival.

Then I struck out with my fist against the wall, the iron bedstead, or the marble-top table.

I was much bruised next morning, but what mattered it, since I was so soon to die?

I went in quest of a rope. I had believed formerly that, when one wished to hang oneself, nothing could be easier than to find a rope. A sad mistake. In my search, I traversed the entire hotel to no purpose. The little waitress—the one whom I have since found is so pretty—demanded of me,

"But what does Monsieur wish to do with a rope?"

At last, with a length of hemp in my pocket, I left the hotel, and made my way to a spot in the woods where I had often been before. I found here, behind an inextricable tangle of foliage, the same inviting retreat where I had once lingered to dream. There could certainly exist no more appropriate spot for the deed I now contemplated.

While walking along I had thought of Berthe—possibly her name was Berthe,—and I cursed her with all my soul. Then I looked at my rope; I measured it; I tested its strength. It was not the sort of a rope I wished. It appeared to be too short, and too large around. I was vexed. You can scarcely imagine how an annoyance of this sort may influence one's ideas.

And here was another vexation; upon reaching the chosen spot, I was disagreeably surprised to find it occupied by another. A person, with his back turned to me, was engaged in fastening a rope to a branch above his head—the very branch which I had selected for my own.

"What are you doing there?" I demanded of him.

He faced me suddenly.

"What concern of yours is it?" he asked.

"You think, perhaps, that I do not divine your intention," I cried.

"And if I wish to kill myself, that is altogether my affair."

"Kill yourself?"

I looked at him. He seemed to be an amiable young fellow, with an open countenance, sympathetic eyes, and an interesting pallor.

"So you wish to kill yourself." And suspecting him to be the victim of an unhappy love affair, I added, "About some worthless woman?"

"Sir!" he cried.

"Poor idiot!" I thought; "lovers are all alike—he defends her even yet."

The stranger was silent.

"Will you permit me to give you a bit of advice?" I inquired. "Leave your rope where it is"—I had noticed that it was better than mine—"go home. You will thank me for this after awhile."

He shook his head.

"I want to die."

"Don't prepare any poignant regrets for the morrow," I continued, with sweet insistence. "I repeat what I have said. After you are buried you will bemoan your precipitancy, and then it will be too late."

"You say this, because you do not know what has happened to me."

"But I suspect."

"No, you cannot have even a suspicion. Oh, sir, a woman whom I adored, for whom——"

And he told me his story. Incredible coincidence! It was absolutely my own! This comparison set me thinking.

"Your silence shows me your approval," said Charles. I had just learned his name to be Charles.

"Not at all," I cried. I did not wish to appear like a weathercock. "There is nothing in your history which justifies you in having recourse to the end of a rope."

Charles had begun to interest me.

"Listen, my friend; you are out of your reason. Why should you wish to be treated more kindly than other men whose sweethearts play them false every day?"

"But they are not as grossly deceived as I have been."

"I beg your pardon."

"No, no."

"Oh, yes."

"No."

"Yes, *sapristi!* I know whereof I speak. And now you are free to make another choice—a much better one. There are plenty of them."

"Better than she? That is not possible."

"Indeed."

"Her equal does not exist."

"But she——"

"Oh, no."

"Ah, well, in the first moments, one may have such ideas, but wait a month and you will see."

My words sounded so replete with wisdom that, little by little, I began to find pleasure in listening to myself. I continued:

"What good would it do you to die? I would like you to tell me how it could advance your interests? The woman who deserted you, has, or has not a heart. If she has one——"

"Oh, but she has not."

"Naturally, she has not. Your death then would only flatter her. She will pose ever afterward as having been the cause of a suicide. Do you wish her to do so? And the world—what kind of funeral oration will it deliver over you? It will ask, 'Was he such a fool as that?' Yes, Charles, you will be justly treated as an imbecile."

I grew eloquent. It was because I had begun to feel that I was defending my own cause. All that I should have said to myself, I said now to Charles—to my friend Charles, for I loved him already, with the same affection that he gave me in return. There was such conviction in my voice that Charles, yielding, fell into my arms.

"Do with me what you will," he cried.

"Very well," I said to him, with a sigh so profound as to reveal the empty void in my stomach, "let us go to breakfast."

I conducted him to the hotel. Our emotions increased, and our appetites were terrible.

The table where we sat, with its snowy linen, its sparkling candles, its dainty viands, only added to our hunger.

When a thick steak with potatoes had enveloped us in its savory odors—when, shared between us, its vermilion juice stained our knives—when after the first mouthful, feverishly devoured, we had swallowed a few

glasses of Bordeaux, we looked silently at each other, while our eyes said for us:

"Ah, life is sweet."

"But suppose I had not met you!" sighed Charles, his heart filled with gratitude.

And I thought, on my own part, "The deuce! If I had not met him!"

"Do you know," began the young man, after another mouthful, "it was an unheard-of piece of good luck that you should have gone to the very spot in the woods where I chanced to be."

I said nothing.

"Ah!" he exclaimed suddenly, "it must have been some good genius who led you there."

My face flushed in spite of me.

"You will not believe me," I told him, "but I went there as you did—to hang myself."

"Ah, bah!"

My companion burst out laughing.

"That is too good," he cried.

And we touched glasses.

Mr. N. B. Winston, who has written this strange ghost-story for ROMANCE, says that it was related to him by people of high position and the most undoubted veracity. He adds, "That this story is true, and that the little brown woman was a reality to those who beheld her, I can vouch for over my own signature."

THE LITTLE BROWN WOMAN.

——"Stay illusion!
If thou hast any sound or use of voice, speak to me."

AT a distance of about thirty miles from Harper's Ferry is situated one of the oldest and quaintest towns in Virginia. Not only do its historic associations attract the traveller, but the picturesque charm of its old-time homes induces him to linger there, hunting curios, or plucking thyme and myrtle from the garden of some ancient dame. Of all these homes, none so invites the curious passer-by as that of Miss Polly Waller. A stone-wall, ivy-grown and discolored, incloses the spacious garden in the centre of which stands this lady's house. What delights are revealed to those who can roam at will in this garden on a sunny day! The inner side of the stone wall is a background against which one sees a row of twisted white-lilac bushes, the blossoms of which in spring fill the whole neighborhood with their delicious sweetness. A carefully trimmed and regularly grown border of box encloses the flower-beds, and outlines the well-trodden gravel walks, along the sides of which grow rosemary and calacanthus, yellow jessamine and syringa, citron aloes and damask roses.

The house itself possesses a charm equal to that of its surrounding ground. A square brick structure, with a broad hall through the middle, ample double rooms on either side, the house is artistic and suggestive because of its colonial architecture, its highly polished floors, and its display of antique rugs and furniture, family portraits, and unique embroideries, designed and worked in the patterns and colors of a century ago. The

mistress of this domain, Miss Polly Waller, a painstaking, enthusiastic little lady of sixty summers, has no earthly possessions, but her aristocratic connections, her house, and her garden—the former she cherishes with all the prejudice and exactness of caste—the latter she places most hospitably at the disposal of any boarders who come to her "satisfactorily indorsed."

One evening in the month of September several ladies were gathered about a card-table in Miss Polly's front parlor. The evening being cool and windy, the huge fireplace was piled high with blazing logs. So enticing did the fire prove, that very soon all the ladies threw down their cards, and grouped themselves close to the hearth. The high wind outside caused an overhanging maple-bough to lash itself against the window-pane. This excited the nerves of some of the ladies, and this, with the social and expansive element which a fire has always the power to awaken, turned the conversation upon the weird and fantastic.

"I can tell you a genuine ghost story; and what's more, *every word* of it is true," said Miss Blunt, a lady who, though still unwedded, could own to years and experience sufficient to expect that her word be accepted.

"Tell us! Tell us!" clamored half a dozen female voices.

"Well——" began Miss Blunt, who was a frail, nervous little woman, with wide-open, startled eyes, which one could easily believe had acquired their present expression from frequent observations of ghosts. Before continuing, she drew nearer to the fire, clasped one knee about with both hands, and continued: "Some years ago I went to New York on a visit to a relative. This cousin was descended on the parental side from an old Dutch family, which in days long gone by had built a great house in Bleecker Street, and there for three generations had lived in the enjoyment of wealth and high social position. At last, however, evil days came, the house in Bleecker Street passed into strange hands, and the old family became scattered.

"This cousin had somewhat regained the wealth and position which his family had lost. By a strange freak,

he rebought the old house in Bleecker Street, preferring it to an up-town residence. After he had refitted it, it made a charming home. It was after he and his family had been living there for some months, that I went to visit them. When looking out of the windows it seemed queer to be in this part of New York, but when I gave myself up to the comfort and beauty of the rooms, it was as delightful as any house I ever saw. At least I thought so, though the family itself did not seem quite certain concerning it.

"My cousin, I could see, was charmed with the success of his scheme, and had the satisfied air of a man who has played a bold game, and won. The wife and daughters did not appear to partake of his content; they were restless at times, and I was inclined to think them wanting in gratitude.

"One day I was sitting in my room, untying some embroidery silks, when, upon looking up, I saw standing before me a little old woman, all dressed in brown, with a white handkerchief crossed upon her breast. Her face was that of a foreigner, and her eyes had that pathetic, appealing look in them, which goes straight to the heart. Finding this strange woman in my room unannounced, I felt some surprise, and questioned her sharply. She gave me no reply, but stood there, looking me through, as it were, with those pathetic eyes. Thinking her some foreign sewing-woman, who was possibly embarrassed at her inability to use the English language, I told her to accompany me downstairs, where some one, no doubt, could be found who would understand what she wished.

"We started together out of the room. I preceded, but kept her in sight; upon the stairs she seemed to disappear suddenly. I called to her. I ran back to see if I had been mistaken, and if she lingered still in my room. I did not see her anywhere. Then I concluded that she had disappeared into one of the other rooms, and that I had better descend, and send some one to seek her. I went down into the library, where my cousin's wife and daughters were occupied with their embroideries. I told them about the little woman upstairs, and

requested that they look after her. When I had finished my story, my cousin's wife shivered a little, and remarked in a strained voice, 'That is strange.' She rose from her chair. 'You said she had very pathetic eyes?' she asked. 'Yes, the most pathetic I ever saw,' I replied. The girls looked down at their work, but said nothing. Their mother left the room, but soon returned, saying 'it was nothing.' After this we settled down to our work, and the morning, though perceptibly chilled by my little episode, passed quickly by."

At this point in the narration all the ladies drew closer together, and forming a circle about the narrator, urged her to proceed.

"Some nights after this," continued Miss Blunt, "I awoke suddenly from my sleep, and there, standing by my bed, almost bending over me, I saw clearly, by the street light, which fell directly into my room, this same little woman, all dressed in brown, with the white handkerchief crossed upon her breast, and looking earnestly at me as she had done some days before. I sprang up quickly, and called to her as I hastened to light the gas; but she was not to be seen, nor was there any sign of any one having entered my room. It is not necessary to say that I bolted my door securely, wrapped myself in the blankets, and sat up the rest of the night. This time I concluded that my cousin's wife had some demented relative or friend confined in the house, and that she had escaped accidentally, and made these excursions into my room. I determined to speak to my cousin in the morning and obtain the truth from him, and thus protect myself against further alarm and fright. When I descended the next morning, I was so fortunate as to meet my cousin alone in the lower hall. 'Come into the library and let me speak with you,' I said. He led me into the room, saying laughingly, 'Have you, too, seen the ghost?' 'Indeed, I have,' I replied, and then told him of what had happened to me. He seemed annoyed. 'It is very strange,' he said. 'No one is confined here in the house. Soon after we came, this same little brown woman appeared to my wife. When she told me of it, I laughed at her. In a

few days, however, the thing repeated itself. Both of the girls have seen her. I myself have not yet been honored. Seriously, though, I begin to fear that there is a mystery. Something must be done. My wife and daughters wished to give up the house a month ago, but I felt that there must be some mistake, and I determined to remain, and prove to them that either it was their overwrought imaginations, or something which would in time explain itself naturally.' At breakfast my cousin related my experience to the family. We discussed the matter very seriously. That same day my cousin's wife heard low cries of distress in one of the vacant bed-rooms. Summoned by her, we went into the room immediately, but found no one. On the night of that day, I was again awakened from my sleep, by the appearance at my bedside of this same little woman, as silent and pathetic as ever. On the following day, the cries of distress were again heard in the vacant bed-room, but no clue to them could be discovered. Of course the whole household was aroused and excited, and there was little rest for any of us. Had it not been for the ardent feeling of my cousin concerning the old family house nothing could have held us there a day longer. Appreciating his pride in the matter, we determined to wait a while, and, with the assistance of skilled detectives, see if the mystery could be solved.

"A week passed. Detectives came and went, but they discovered nothing. In the mean time, however, the little brown woman appeared twice to me in my room, and as often to my cousin's wife. When we called or rang for some one, she disappeared as suddenly and as mysteriously as she had come.

"I can give you no idea of the sensation she produced upon those who saw her. Above everything we saw at the time, and recalled afterward, those pathetic eyes of hers, looking beseechingly into ours. Whoever she was, she was a woman of deep sorrow, and in some way, we all felt, she represented some terrible tragedy or undying grief.

"One evening, at the end of a week, Mr. Graves, a young detective, called and asked to see the family.

He was shown into the library, and, drawing a package of papers from his pocket, begged leave to lay before us some information which he had obtained. Somewhere in New York, it seems, is kept a record of all the old houses in the city. This enterprising young detective, baffled by his investigations at the house, was convinced from what he had learned that the affair partook of the supernatural; consequently he had gone into these records, and hunted out that of this old family house in Bleecker Street. What he told us contained the only explanation of the little brown woman which we have ever had, and as my cousin gave up the house immediately, none of us have ever seen her since."

"What was it?" asked in a whisper the group of women.

"After this house had passed from my cousin's family," continued Miss Blunt, "it was occupied for some years, it seems, by a Monsieur Grovoche, a French wine-merchant. He lived alone in Bleecker Street with his servants, and was supposed to have amassed a large fortune. When some years had gone by in this way, he suddenly disappeared, and for many years no explanation could be discovered. His mother, a peasant woman from the Gironde, came to this country in the hope of finding him. She spent the remaining years of her life in the search, and the devotion and energy with which she pursued her purpose made her at one time a familiar figure to the police of New York, and especially to the people in Bleecker Street, where she was frequently to be seen. The poor woman died without obtaining any clue to the fate of her son, and soon the whole matter was lost sight of by those who had taken an interest in her. A few years after her death a man died in New Jersey, who left a confession to the effect that the house of Monsieur Grovoche in Bleecker Street had been entered by him one night with the intent to rob; that Monsieur Grovoche had discovered him concealed in his bedroom, and had attacked him; that forthwith he returned the attack, and murdered Monsieur Grovoche by a thrust in the side with a dagger. He knew the house very well, for in

planning the robbery he had been familiarizing himself for some months with it. He dragged the dead body below to a cellar, which he knew contained a drainage-well, into which he dropped it. He then made his escape noiselessly, leaving the treasures of the house untouched. When search was made for the body, which was said to be buried in the well, it was readily discovered, and identified as that of Monsieur Grovoche, by a silver chain and crucifix which still hung about the skeleton's neck. From that time, until my cousin bought and refitted the house, it had remained vacant and an air of mystery had clung about it. I have no doubt, unless it has been pulled down to make way for stores or warehouses, it is vacant to-day and pointed at as a place where a great crime was enacted."

As Miss Blunt finished her story, a very handsome and stately lady entered the room. She threw off her wrap and drew near the attentive group; as she did so, a blonde young girl rose from her seat, and said to her in a husky voice:

"Mother, will you tell these ladies what you saw in your room yesterday?"

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed the lady. "Something *so* strange, I must tell you! Yesterday morning as I was dressing, when I had just lifted my face from its bath, and was about to give it its usual rubbing, I saw standing before me the funniest little old woman, all clad in brown, with a white handkerchief crossed upon her breast, and with the most pathetic eyes I ever beheld. They will haunt me to my dying day. Just as I spoke to her, demanding an explanation of this sudden intrusion, she disappeared, and my daughter there was awakened by my running about the room calling, '*Where is she? Where is she?*'"

Miss Blunt gave a scream of terror, accompanied by the cry, "She has followed me here!"

Every one turned toward her in fright. With her face buried in her hands, she fell forward sobbing convulsively.

Some of the secrets of mining-camps are revealed in this unique Western story by Woodruff Clarke.

IN HORSE-SHOE CAMP.

WARD TALBOT sank wearily upon a fallen tree. The blanket slung from his shoulder by a rawhide thong fell into a forked limb. His rifle slid forward on the ground. Streams of perspiration trickled down his dusty face.

He was near the summit of a mountain, and the forests behind receded to a valley of vast extent, densely wooded, profoundly silent, primeval and uninhabited. A shimmering river wound through the distant trees, and Talbot scowled as he looked back upon it. Six days before that river had lured him from one of these summits in quest of placer-diggings. He was now returning unsuccessful, half-starved and lost.

A deer suddenly appeared before him, not two hundred yards away, near the top of the divide. It was visible in relief against the luminous sky, standing on a small flat rock, with feet gathered and head thrown sideways, curiously alert. The miner uttered an impatient cry. He had seen not less than thirty deer within the last four hours and had not a single cartridge left for his rifle. One hand quickly sought the revolver hanging at his belt, but he shook his head and abandoned the impulse. His mouth watered as the deer bounded off. Not since morning had Talbot tasted food, and it was now five o'clock in the afternoon.

Resuming his blanket and empty rifle, he soon gained the narrow sunburnt crest and rejoiced to behold again the Okanagon Valley, the giant brown buttes against the eastern horizon, and the mighty, snow-clad peaks of British Columbia towering far north. For Ward Talbot was one of that adventurous band who first penetrated the reservation of the Moses Indians in Washington Territory when thrown open for settlement.

Sinewy and strong was Talbot, a young man of robust health and shrewd wits. He wore brown overalls and

blouse, with a revolver and light prospecting pick thrust in his belt; and as he stood beneath a tangled fir, his boots in a mat of partridge-berry vines, and the pendent needles trembling against the edge of his brown canvas hat, a look of perplexity crossed his frank and manly face. He had come over at an unexpected angle and could not quite place his surroundings. A few steps farther and the charred top of a tall burnt pine rose to view. Simultaneously the young miner's face brightened. He found himself not five hundred feet from one of his own claims, the very first one he had staked out, and which he had never visited since the day he located it. The nearest corner stake was directly below him. The tents of Horse-shoe Camp were in sight two miles away, and an hour's walk would take him to his own hut and coffee-pot.

Quite different was this northern slope from the southern acclivity he had lately climbed. The latter was rocky and sandy, its soil washed of vegetable mould by quick-melting snows. On this northern side he struck at once soft earth and a carpet of thick pine grass, down which he strode noiselessly toward a barren spot where boulders projected from the ground and a white stake showed. This was made of cottonwood, rudely squared by an axe, and upon it was pencilled:

Stake B.
Southeast Corner Post.
Quartz Claim, PILLAR OF FIRE,
Located by Ward Talbot
May 25th, 1886.

The miner smiled as he read this, and recalled the peculiar circumstances under which he discovered his first claim.

While hunting, soon after his arrival in the country, he saw far up this mountain-side a dead pine burning brilliantly. Making his way thither in the hope of meeting white men, he reached a deserted Indian camp by the side of a little spring. The abandoned camp-fire had ignited a pile of dry brush, and thence had communicated to a dead but standing pitchpine tree, which roared furiously as it burned, casting off volumes of

black smoke. Here Talbot discovered silver float and a few traces of ore in the rocks, and staked out a claim, naming it the *Pillar of Fire.* When the mining district was organized, he recorded his claim, but had never yet found leisure to come up and investigate it thoroughly.

Talbot now descended toward the centre of his claim. Here were high walls of rock converging toward a massive platform, overhanging the ledge wherein he had found ore. As he approached the walls, he heard a horse whinny, and stopped surprised. An instant later the thud of a pick, striking earth, echoed from the hillside below. There was no mistaking the sound. It fell with regular strokes, tinkling as it occasionally hit rock. Somebody was working his claim.

Talbot set his rifle on end against the rocks at the entrance to the passageway. He took off his rolled blanket and laid it gently down. Then he drew his revolver from his belt and inspected it. The weapon was of dragoon size, carrying balls of heavy calibre. He cocked it quietly, and stole forward between the rugged steps and down to the stone platform overhanging the hillside.

The young miner's face had become very white. He debated his course as he advanced. So far no claims had been jumped in the district. He had avoided disputes and brawls with the miners. He was peaceable and well disposed. But often the most peaceable men are the most dangerous when imposed upon, and now Talbot had but one purpose—to expel this "jumper" from the Pillar of Fire.

He neared the shelf, where the converging walls narrowed to a space not six feet wide. From this point he could see the two opposite end-stakes of his claim nearly eight hundred feet down the declivity, and moving forward a little further, he could also see the centre-stake immediately below him. None of his boundary-marks had been disturbed.

Creeping forth on the irregular platform, Talbot peered over the edge. A few rods down the hill a man was stooping, pick in hand, working in the loose earth.

Miners' rights on the frontier are sharply defined by

custom, and peremptorily defended. Any one who jumps a duly recorded claim does so at his peril, and common assent justifies his summary expulsion and the right of the owner to use force if necessary. Talbot raised his pistol and prepared to hail the intruder, when a new discovery kept him silent.

The jumper was not taking ore from the claim. HE WAS PUTTING ORE IN!

Such was undoubtedly the case. He had turned over considerable earth running in a straight line downward from the ledge whereon Ward Talbot stood, and out of a gunny sack of ore the stranger was sprinkling the soil, covering his deposits lightly with dirt.

Again the horse whinnied. Talbot saw it now, a calico or pinto tied in the bushes. He knew that horse, and peering again at the toiler beneath, recognized him also, and understood the matter better.

The man below was Mose Tannin, a hanger-on in Horse-Shoe Camp, reported to earn his money mostly by gambling and trickery. Two weeks before, in a cursory talk around the evening fire in front of the log hotel, Mose had offered to trade this pinto horse for the Pillar of Fire. Talbot agreed, provided the pinto was delivered to him within three days. Mose had not brought the horse and the proposed bargain therefore was never consummated, but evidently the gambler now assumed ownership of the claim and was "salting" it for some speculative purpose, planting in the soil float of rich quality, which should give an inexperienced person false opinions of the value of the ledge above.

Talbot drew back and deliberated. He had long since grown weary of the artifice and cheating prevalent among miners, and was half-disposed to call out and forbid any farther trespass on his property. But curiosity prevailed. He remained silent and took a position where he could peer down occasionally upon the workman. He watched the care and craft with which the fragments of ore were strewn through the soil, the skill with which the earth was packed down over them, and the patience with which Mose brought water from the spring in his frying-pan and poured it

in successive streams over the surface, washing off all the pick-marks and all traces of his moccasined feet. This done, the wily trickster withdrew, and tying his gunny sack, pickaxe and frying-pan to the pack-saddle, climbed into that uneasy seat and went off down the mountain with his rifle across his lap like any honest prospector returning to camp.

As soon as Mose was safely away, Talbot went below and discovered at once the full scope of the scheme. At the base of the little bluff Mose had uncovered a ledge of syenite and silver-bearing rock ten or twelve feet wide, out of which he had picked several bushels of ore of a very ordinary quality, now lying about on the edge of the chasm. Among this he had scattered ore of higher grade but of similar formation, brought from outside, in the hope that it might beguile some buyer into paying a good price for the claim. It looked to Talbot like a flimsy fraud, not likely to impose on any person of intelligence.

He went forward to his centre-stake. Upon a stone at its base still lay the baking-powder can in which he had left his location-notice—a method used in exposed places where paper, if nailed to a stake, would soon be destroyed by wind and rain. He found the notice untouched within, and strode back scornfully up the hill.

As Talbot returned once more above the boulders and turned the corner toward the rocky walls, he met four deer unexpectedly face to face. Springing forward promptly, the youth stampeded them into the passage-way. With eager excitement he plucked his revolver from its hostler and fired. A doe fell. The others dashed back desperately through the smoke, passed him, and vanished over the divide.

Advancing toward the fallen deer, Talbot reflected with disquiet that Mose Tannin would hear this shot, perhaps turn back and discover his recent espial. When, therefore, the wounded doe staggered to its feet and stood holding up one limp fore-leg, shrinking from the stony verge, yet not daring to take the only path of retreat toward its enemy in the way, he hesitated to give a final shot. Drawing his short-handled prospecting pick

he hurled it with an accuracy and force that struck the wounded animal off the rock. Dashing forward, Talbot saw the doe gather itself up below and leap down the hillside, leaving splashes of blood every few feet. So copious was the loss that he felt sure the game would soon fall and die. Hurriedly catching up his gun and blanket, he ran around the ledges and followed after. Near the centre-stake he regained his pick, noting as he did so the numerous deer-tracks made in the wet earth. As the ground would set hard in that dry altitude before the next noon, these tracks must necessarily help to hide Mose Tannin's trick.

Following that crimson trail, Talbot found his doe in a thicket of willows near the brook, lying dead with head extended and legs drawn in. Here he waited to see if Mose returned. It soon became evident that if the latter had heard the shot he had no desire to learn who fired, but had kept on toward Horse-Shoe Camp.

Whereupon Ward Talbot shouldered the carcass and carried it into a secluded dell. In the gathering twilight he built a fire, cooked a haunch of venison, ate heartily, and rolling in his mackinaw, lay down to sleep beneath the tamaracks.

Three days passed ere Ward came into Horse-Shoe Camp. Meantime he had explored without success a distant ravine. Footsore and jaded, he appeared at nightfall before the hut where his partners sat around the fire.

Talbot's partners were three sober miners, owners of a promising claim which they were developing. The youth had chosen them as associates because alone of all the camp they neither drank nor gambled. He was kindly greeted, condoled with over his ill-luck, and given a cheering supper. Then all four went wearily to their blankets. An hour later a hand shook Ward's shoulder. A voice whispered in his ear:

"Ho, Talbot! I say! Get up a minute. I've something to tell you."

The young man rose on his elbow. By the dying firelight he saw Stymer, the burly, black-whiskered bar-keeper of the log hotel, who beckoned him to

follow outside. They stood by the glowing coals together.

Stymer began in a low, gruff voice:

"When I first came to camp, you gave me half your can of coffee."

Talbot sleepily remembered some such kindness to the destitute new-comer and rejoined impatiently, "What of it?"

"I made up my mind if I could ever throw three thousand dollars in your way, I'd do it. And now I can."

Talbot was wide awake instantly. Tired of mining, he would be glad even with a single thousand to return home, buy a good team and engage again in farming. He listened eagerly as Stymer continued:

"There's a man in camp, Claypool of St. Paul, has offered Mose Tannin three thousand dollars for the Pillar of Fire. I heard 'em talk it over on a log by the hotel. You just hang to that claim and sell it yourself. Mose never brought you the pinto, did he?"

"No," replied Talbot with much disgust. "The claim is still mine. But I don't believe it's worth fifty cents."

"That's not your lookout. If it's worth three thousand to Claypool, take his money mighty quick!" And Stymer hurried away under the quaking aspens, leaving Talbot much discouraged. For the youth, while anxious to sell any of his claims honestly, knew that the stranger had been beguiled by Tannin to believe the prospect a rich one, and he scrupled to take advantage of the deceit.

After breakfast, next morning, he started down the creek toward "town." On the way he heard hoof-strokes coming up the winding trail, and spied the spotted pinto. Stepping behind a clump of alders, he kept still while Mose Tannin rode by, evidently bound for Talbot's hut to deliver up the pinto. Ward was glad to avoid him, preferring to meet Mr. Claypool first and undeceive him.

Arrived at the hotel, he learned that the stranger had gone off early on horseback toward the Pillar of Fire, alone. Ward at once started off by a short cut up the mountain. As he carried only his revolver, haversack,

and poll-pick, his progress was rapid, and when an hour later he reached his claim, he saw a horse tied to a fir near the centre-stake.

There were fresh holes in the line of earth where Mose had strewn false float, and Talbot's quick eye saw new breaks in the face of the ledge above. Peering about for Mr. Claypool, he observed smoke rising near, and making his way through the bushes, soon found him in a nook among the boulders. Here, to Ward's surprise, a rough little furnace had been built of flat stone, in which fire was roaring. A blowpipe, hammer, crucible, and phials of acid lay on the rocks. Evidently a rude assay had been made of the mineral gathered.

Mr. Claypool stepped into sight, holding tiny scales in his hand and about to make record with pencil in a pocket-tablet. He started in confusion when he met the youth's honest gaze. Ward at once judged him to be a professional man, or a druggist or chemist, for his complexion was pallid and his hands dainty and white.

"Well, you don't find much high-grade ore, I reckon," said Talbot with that freedom common to the frontier. "There's none here."

Mr. Claypool appeared much offended by this blunt inquiry. He was a thin, slim, middle-aged man of cold and reserved manners, having a very crafty face. He looked at the young man sternly.

"No. This claim is not worth five dollars. It will not assay ten ounces of silver to the ton."

Whereupon he slipped his utensils into a valise which he slung to his shoulder, strode across to his horse, and rode away without further comment or attention.

Talbot was much irritated by this peremptory withdrawal, but relieved to know the stranger had not been deceived by Mose. He was puzzled, however, when he looked at the bits of mineral left from the assay. They were deeply marked with yellow chloride stain and he knew the ore examined must have been rich in mineral, so that the conclusion of the chemist seemed a strange one. He was glad he had escaped any base temptation to try and sell his claim himself at a high price on the strength of Mose Tannin's representations, since the

acumen of the visitor would evidently have foiled the attempt. He started off across the hills cheerily with clear conscience and light heart.

All that afternoon Stymer chafed uneasily behind his bar. Mose Tannin had come in with Mr. Claypool, and the two sat by the tables trying to close the bargain. Mose demanded three thousand dollars for the Pillar of Fire. Mr. Claypool now refused, denounced the claim as a mere ordinary prospect of unknown value, and even began to collect his baggage preparatory to departure on the stage next morning. Stymer, long-experienced in the mines, set them down for a pair of sharps, and understood their game. He divined that Mose had "salted" the claim. He had peered into the stranger's baggage, by which he conjectured that Mr. Claypool, although fresh from town and ignorant of the ordinary mining-tricks, had picked up a smattering knowledge of assaying, and had come into the camp hoping by stealthy tests to find some valuable claim which he could obtain for a low price. He shrewdly judged that Mr. Claypool believed the prospect worth a hundred thousand dollars, and was affecting doubt and trying to make Mose think it worthless that he might buy it for a nominal sum. Meantime, where was Talbot? Why was he not here managing the bargain himself?

Toward nightfall the matter was condensed. Mr. Claypool with great show of reluctance at last agreed to pay three thousand dollars, from which price Mose would not recede. And now he desired that the claim should be immediately deeded to him.

Mose confessed that he had never yet received his papers from the original owner, Ward Talbot, but agreed to find him that evening and effect both transfers.

Soon after, Ward came by with a half-dozen returning prospectors, and Mose went out to him. Stymer followed anxiously to the door. Mr. Claypool sat within reading a newspaper.

"There's your horse, Talbot," said Mose in an off-hand manner, pointing to the pinto tied to a tree near.

"My horse? I don't want the horse. That bargain was off long ago."

In vain Mose expostulated, argued, raged. Ward had a right to call the bargain void, since the other had not fulfilled his agreement. At last Mose drew a revolver menacingly. Stymer from the doorway gave a knowing wink, and Ward, profiting by this hint, treated the threat with indifference. If Mose wanted the claim, he must buy it.

"What do you ask?" demanded Mose desperately.

Ward hesitated. Stymer plucked from the earth a piece of charred wood and scrawled on the hewn doorpost behind Mose's back, 1,500; which marks he immediately erased.

"Fifteen hundred dollars!" was the reply.

Mose burst forth with fresh expostulation. In vain he stormed and declaimed against the exorbitant demand. Upheld by Stymer's hints, Ward was firm, and the angry gambler was compelled at last to see that he must lose in this way one-half of his expected gains. He was hastened to this conclusion by Mr. Claypool's appearance, who left his newspaper, drawn by the loud voices, and who frowned when he learned Talbot's identity. The youth at once suspected that the stranger was also trying to defraud, and all his sympathy with the supposed victim vanished.

Mose now confessed that before he could settle with the original owner and properly transfer the claim, fifteen hundred dollars must be paid. Accordingly all adjourned to the shanty of the surveyor, who was also notary public. Mr. Claypool had taken pains to learn that the claim was duly recorded and Ward Talbot's right a clear one. Deed was made by Ward to Mose Tannin, and by Mose to Mr. Claypool, as Mose would not consent to a direct transfer from Ward to the third party.

"I will sell my right, but I give everybody to understand that I regard the claim as of little value," declared Ward openly ere he signed the paper. The unheard-of honesty of such a statement at such a moment amazed the miners present. Mr. Claypool with a cold nod made no reply, but gave Mose fifteen hundred dollars, and the cash was passed by Mose into Ward's hand.

At this point the transaction stopped, albeit the docu-

ments were all signed. Mr. Claypool overheard a remark from a bystander which aroused his suspicions. He left the deed in the surveyor's charge until morning, when he agreed to pay the balance due.

Great was the hilarity in Horse-Shoe Camp next day. Mr. Claypool hired two experienced miners to go with him to the Pillar of Fire, where thorough examination was made of the ledge, the worthless quality of the claim disclosed, and Mose Tannin's artifice uncovered. Then ensued a furious scene in the hotel barroom, Claypool demanding back his fifteen hundred dollars on peril of arrest for conspiracy; and Mose fiercely denying fraud, defying the law, and threatening to shoot the visitor if he failed to pay the remainder due upon their bargain. Stymer declared that he knew nothing of the rights of the matter, but one thing was clear—that Claypool had nothing to do with Ward Talbot, who sold out fair and square to Mose and took his money from Mose alone; therefore he must look to Mose only, and not to Ward, for his redress. This declaration the miners present hoarsely cheered in the interests of fair play, to Claypool's great alarm. It followed that Mr. Claypool, overawed and affrighted, profoundly chagrined to find himself so easily deceived, left camp at once, while Mose, the butt of merciless jests, mounted his pinto and fled over the trails to the Frazer River placers.

The nightly camp-fire roared before Ward Talbot's hut and shed its genial rays far into the recesses of the quaking asps, while the youth spread before his partners in a farewell banquet the choicest viands obtainable. His comrades passed the sooty coffee-pot with merry words, and their grizzled leader said, as he whipped open a fresh can of potted ham:

"I'm glad you're going back to the farm, Ward, with the stake you've made. It's better for you. I'd like to return to civilization myself, but an old miner like me can't change. You've had a queer piece of luck, and the best of it is you were true and square yourself from first to last, and those two greedy sharps played their little game to your advantage. It isn't often that mining tricks are such a benefit to honest folks!"

Is it possible that newly-married couples really quarrel? From this semi-tragic description of a honeymoon, one is led to think so. It is written for ROMANCE by Richard Tinker.

ON THE MOSELLE.

THE summer tide of travel was rushing through the Rhine valley. Express trains and express steamers flew back and forth between Cologne and Bingen, like huge shuttles weaving the monotonous fabric of the regular tour. The same ruins were hourly scanned by a thousand eyes raised from a thousand similar guide-books,—eyes that in a day's review have seen the Rhine. Only here and there a few, wiser than the rest, had taken shelter in an eddy of this human current. Floating through the valley for a week or more, these really saw the river.

Two of these wiser ones had stayed for a day at Coblentz and, charmed by the Moselle, which there meets the Rhine, had determined to explore it. To Mrs. Austen the Rhine was an old story, the Moselle a new one. She was weary, too, of the procession of brides, her friends, who, like herself, had come with their husbands to this river of Hymen.

"We will go to-morrow to Moselkern, Harry," she announced. The obedient husband, who would have gone to the Congo had she willed it, acquiesced. He had no idea where Moselkern was, and he really cared very little. Europe bored him, even on this, his first visit. He hated scenery, he knew nothing of history; art was "stuff." For a young man who had always possessed money, who was fairly intelligent, and upon whose education some care had been bestowed, Harry Austen was singularly stupid and indifferent. No one knew why the beautiful Sophie Townsend had married him. His only recommendation, indeed his only distinguishing mark, was his love for her. He adored her with the blind faith and contentment of a dumb creature. He was handsome in a way; healthy, straight and big, with

reddish hair that seemed always to have just been put in order, so tractable was it.

She was beautiful, in a restless, overpowering fashion. Her blue eyes and sparkling teeth, her changing color and certain dainty movements of her hands challenged, almost aggressively, attention and admiration. Above all, she was trim and graceful; what the English call "well-groomed." Altogether, a New York girl of the best type, and with so much of a fortune, in prospect at least, that she might easily have made the conventional good marriage. Instead, she chose Harry Austen, who possessed none of the elements of a "match" except his spirit of devotion and a sum of money, which, while giving him by no means a fortune, had kept him always idle. However, they had married, the half-day's wonder had been forgotten, and they had sailed, with the other June pairs, for Europe.

If Austen had ever taken the trouble to find out anything, or if his wife had deigned to tell him, he would have learned that Moselkern is a vineyard hamlet not far from Coblentz, and that it is the port, so to speak, of Schloss Eltz, one of the middle-age castles that dot these valleys. When the Moselle is high, a small puffy steamer takes one there. When the stream is low, a little train drags one in slow and easy curves between the river and the vineyard covered hills.

Even the imperturbable guard was moved by the fact of American passengers for this out-of-the-way place, and, when the train drew up at the station, threw open the door with a flourish. The entire population of the village were awaiting, on the platform, this one event of the day. They respectfully drew back to make way for the unusual passengers. Austen was visibly and audibly disgusted with the hamlet, and even his wife's courage quailed before the prospect of a stay in such a place. Still, she had announced her intention of remaining there to rest, and she seldom changed her mind. Besides, they could not get away for twenty-four hours.

Their inn stared them in the face. Entering, they found the first floor to be a single room, a combination of kitchen, dining-room and office. Their host, who

greeted them with the effusion born of rarity, was old, toothless and jolly; his wife, older and more bent, but no less jolly. The house seemed one of centuries. Timbered, with plastered interspaces, and a moss-grown roof of tile, it was, in a degree, picturesque, but it was pervaded too strongly by an air of neglect, almost of squalor. However, a stay there would be a new experience, and would "work up well" in conversation.

The next morning, very early, they started on one of the few excursions that the neighborhood affords, a visit to Schloss Eltz. It is a charming walk, over the shoulders of a vineyard hill, through a wide intervale with a low, whitewashed farmhouse at its farthest point, then by a gradual climb through a well-kept forest to a high point overlooking the valley. Plunging through a ravine, one reaches unexpectedly the castle. It is a formal, square and ugly building, needing but the accessories to look like an old print.

Their walk was fruitless. "They had not the Herr Graf's permission to enter?"

"No, they did not know the Herr Graf's permission was necessary."

"Very sorry, but the Herr Graf's orders are peremptory. It is necessary to present a card of admission from him."

Sophie carried on the conversation in German, while her husband stood helplessly, waiting until such time as she might please to interpret it. She spoke German well and, in her sense of defeat, drew upon all her resources of hurried eloquence and graceful pantomime. But the stolid gatekeeper was indifferent to everything, even to the money which Sophie, somewhat petulantly, bade Austen offer.

But the eager gestures and the pretty, sputtering German of this dainty pleader were not wholly lost. Her husband was enraptured with the picture she made, framed in the old gateway, her play of feature intensified by the flickering sunshine through the overhanging beech. And from within the castle yard had come a young German, attracted by the sound of voices. He stopped, half-hidden, until Sophie's eloquence, through

lack of breath and words, came to an end, and then, advancing, politely offered to assist her.

He was a fellow of about thirty, with the studied unkemptness of a Teuton on a holiday. His face was sensitive, almost womanish, and the mobility of eyes and mouth betrayed the artist.

At sight of him the gatekeeper grew more obstinate. A witness to his faithfulness as guardian of the castle was an unexpected boon. He redoubled his forcible denials, shaking his head angrily at Madame, scornfully at the American Mein Herr, who, sitting on a projecting root of the beech, watched, in a sort of ecstasy of admiration, his beautiful, wonderful wife. The added arguments of the young German were, of course, worse than in vain. The porter was obdurate even to profanity. At this, Sophie, waving a commanding hand toward her husband, strolled away with the air of a conqueror, deigning neither to look at the porter nor to thank her young ally.

The return from the castle was not so pleasant as the walk thither. The sunshine seemed to have forsaken the forest paths, and the ground felt clammy and damp. Mrs. Austen was chagrined that an expedition so peculiarly her own should have been a failure. Harry did not admire her wrath now that, in default of other object, it was directed toward himself. They walked in silence for a long time. At last he ventured to ask, "Why didn't the old chap let us in?"

"Why? My dear, why? If you understood German and could ever say anything, instead of putting me forward into such unwomanly prominence, you would know why."

This was scandalously unjust. Harry knew that she delighted in this prominence. She must be in high temper. Ten minutes more of silence. Then Sophie, spitefully, "If it hadn't been for that clownish German, we should have got in."

"What had he to do with it?"

"This much," still more spitefully; "he who ought not, did what you, who ought, did not." This was quite too involved for Harry. He looked at her blankly.

"He interfered," she continued; "and that too, just at the moment when I had persuaded the odious porter to let us in. Of course the old bear wasn't to be dictated to by an outsider, so all my effort was wasted."

"But what was the row," mildly insisted Austen, "that the said old bear wouldn't let us in?"

"Because we had no ticket, stupid," with the emphasis one uses toward a naughty child.

Harry made no reply. Having found out the one fact that interested him, he had no further curiosity in the matter. He smoked calmly as they walked, occasionally glancing at his wife to see if her good-nature had returned.

They reached the inn just as their only fellow-lodgers, an English family, were rising from the table. Dinner was over, but it was easy for the laughing old hostess to prepare another. "Of course she knew about the tickets, but she would not dare to have presumed that the distinguished Americans did not know, too."

"Oh! how bad, how bad that the high-born lady had walked so far for nothing."

The whole family, the entire village, came in to hear about the luckless journey, and to suggest ways and means of getting into the castle. The owner was in Vienna. It would take several days to get an answer from him.

"Did not the high-born lady know the Count? No? Strange. We thought every one knew the good count. He lives at the castle very little. But it is great feasting when he spends a few weeks there. Ah! Moselkern is then like a great city, like Coblentz, with the Herr Graf's servants and horses!"

Sophie was now determined to see the interior of Schloss Eltz. She would write to the Count. What a pity, she sighingly thought, that she could not send her smile, her eager manner, by mail. Still, she could write a fair German script, and one can put much of one's self into a letter.

This resolve of Sophie's meant at least a week's stay at the wretched little inn. Harry protested, but in vain. His wife smiled vaguely, and called him a dear, naughty boy, which was scarcely relevant.

He always made the best of his circumstances, however unpleasant. While Sophie, with some effort, it must be confessed, wrote her letter, he tried to make friends with the English family. As well attempt to hob-nob with the monuments in St. Paul's. The governess frowned, the girls giggled, the father frigidly and ponderously quoted a remark of "My cousin, Lord ——." In despair, he joined some urchins fishing at the river's edge, who made him welcome and talked to him in their harsh *patois*.

At supper appeared the young fellow whom they had met at the castle, in the morning. He introduced himself, in the easy German fashion, as, Herr Krause, and soon Sophie and he were in animated conversation. He addressed a word now and then to Austen, but as he knew no English, this formality soon degenerated into an occasional smile and nod, returned rather grudgingly.

Herr Krause proved to be an artist of some note, sketching in the Moselle valley. He was well educated, travelled, and a gentleman. So good an opportunity to improve her knowledge of German was not to be lost.

The next morning, when the Austens came down to breakfast, the artist had already gone to the castle, but he returned early in the afternoon and proposed a row on the river. Sophie was delighted.

"Harry is so fond of rowing; aren't you, Harry?" Of course Harry was, and of course it fell to him to hire a boat.

With painful pantomime,—he was not good at gesture,—he succeeded in getting one, at twice its value. His wife and Herr Krause settled themselves comfortably in the stern, and he rowed them about as Sophie dictated. The German sketched constantly, talking in a rattling, jaunty way, treating Mrs. Austen in a manner that she would not have tolerated in an American. Her eagerness to exercise herself in German made her oblivious to all else. Harry's protest, when they were again alone, made her indignant, persuading her to show even more marked favor to Herr Krause, simply to disprove her husband's suspicion.

On the following day the artist gave up his painting

entirely. He had planned a riding excursion to a distant village, and, at Mrs. Austen's charmingly delivered command, Harry hired horses, at an exorbitant price. He rode well and was perhaps not sorry to have a chance to show himself not wholly a nonentity. Herr Krause, he rejoiced to see, rode horribly, and Austen looked forward to the complete downfall of the German, since Sophie detested awkwardness, especially on horseback. Indeed, it had been hinted that Harry had won her heart in the saddle. But how mysterious are the ways of women! He vowed they were quite beyond him, when he saw his elegant and fastidious wife complimenting the contortions of Krause, holding back her horse to save him the torture of a rapid trot, and coolly snubbing Harry's jokes at their friend's expense.

This was too much even for the patient Austen. His pride was wounded, and he raged and swore inwardly. Under ordinary circumstances, he would really have enjoyed the ride, but now it was misery to him. He whipped and spurred his horse without mercy, riding ahead for a mile or two and furiously rushing back, always to find the two laughing and prattling like children. The foreign tongue added fuel to the fire of jealousy within him. Every word, unknown and uncouth, seemed full of hideous meaning. As some particularly harsh guttural was uttered, he would laugh aloud, but with a shrill laugh quite unlike his usual placid chuckle.

At the end of the ride his horse was thoroughly winded. Indeed it shocked him to perceive how ill he had used the beast. For he was of a kindly nature and liked horses,—liked them rather better than men. He paid a double fee for the poor animal, charging the owner, as well as he could by signs, to look well after him.

He came back to the inn much humbled in spirit. The eloquent lecture which he had planned to give his wife was wholly forgotten in his contrition over his treatment of the horse. With the morning, however, his jealousy returned. And not without cause. Krause and Sophie seemed now to have a sort of secret under-

standing. Not satisfied with the absolute safeguard of the foreign tongue, they whispered when he appeared. They passed the artist's sketch-block back and forth, much amused with it, but never offering to show it to Austen. Krause, staring at Harry for a moment, would scribble and then pass the block to Mrs. Austen, who would nod and laugh. It was insufferable.

"Caricaturing me, by Jove!" thought Harry, "and right before my face, too." He stood it as long as he could, pretending to read, but torn with the most desperate emotions. At last, groaning inwardly, he strode off down to the river. He had determined to fling himself in and end his misery; but the bottom of the stream was less than two feet down, and he could not make a spectacle of himself by lying flat on his face, to drown like a kitten. No, he would shoot himself. But that, or drowning either, would be just what Sophie wanted, and he hated her. He wouldn't give her the satisfaction of taking himself out of the way. He would stay and hound her like an avenging fate.

"Now I know why she came to this God-forsaken village," he muttered. "She planned the whole thing, to come here and find this dirty painter, whom she had probably met before."

But where? And he ransacked his memory in vain for some image of an earlier meeting. However, this solution of the problem satisfied him, and he made up his mind that they must leave Moselkern at once. Full of the idea, he hurried back to the inn, stalked in, with somewhat of a high-tragedy air, and ordered Sophie to pack their trunks immediately. She laughed a little nervously, for he had seen her hide something as he came in, and inquired, "What did you say, dear?"

"I said," with a glare at Krause, "that you will be so good as to pack our trunks. We are going to leave this place."

"But how, dear? On horseback?"

Oh! the malice, to his ears, of that "On horseback?"

"No, Mrs. Austen, by train."

"But do you know the time, my dear?"

"I do. It is half-past two o'clock in the afternoon."

Every word was uttered with the precision of a schoolmaster.

"But you do not know, you who have travelled so much"—again the cursed malice,—"that no train leaves here again until noon to-morrow?" Once more Sophie laughed, quite confidently this time, for Krause had left the room, carrying with him, under the skirts of his long coat, the mysterious object the hiding of which had discomposed her.

Austen stood a moment irresolute. It is difficult for the private to suddenly take command and give orders to his officer. At last he said, with a thunderous emphasis quite ludicrous, "Then, Mrs. Austen, you will go to your room and stay there till we do leave."

Sophie looked at him a moment as though he had lost his wits. But immediately the whole situation burst upon her; she threw back her pretty head and laughed, peal upon peal of the most exquisite laughter, the art of which she had learned long ago and made a part of her stock of charms. She laughed till the tears rolled down her cheeks and her breath came in little gasping sobs. Austen had exerted his authority and had been routed, horse, foot and dragoons. Nothing remained for him except to save his dignity by a measured retreat. He left the room, closing the door behind him.

He went toward the river, with no intention now of suicide, but to formulate his ideas. It was seldom that he had an idea of importance, but now he possessed a great one, and he must give it time to emerge from the haze of his brain. He seated himself on the thick grass, and stared at the shallow waves dancing in the afternoon sunshine. At the end of a half-hour, he got up, shook himself, raised his fine figure to its full height and drew a deep breath. Then he moved slowly toward the inn.

His wife was not in the general living-room where he had left her. He stepped softly upstairs to her chamber. The door was slightly ajar and he peeped in. There he saw her, kneeling before her trunk, holding in her hand a jewel-box which he had given her and in which she kept his photograph, a miniature of

him painted just before their marriage, and a lot of other sentimental trifles. She hurriedly pulled out one keepsake after another, crowding some of them into her pocket, and finally took out the pictures. Austen almost cried out. "—— her," he muttered, "What is she doing with those things? I know. She is going to give them to that Dutch ape. I suppose they want my picture to jeer at and caricature when I'm not around."

Sophie was rising from her knees, and Austen, before she could see him, darted into his own room, searched hastily in his trunk, found what he wanted, and thrust it into his pocket. He waited until he heard Sophie go down, and out into the garden. Then he followed. At the foot of the stairway he met Krause. The German bowed, quizzically, and would have passed him, but Austen touched his arm and, pointing toward the door, made a motion as of walking. Krause understood, took his hat from the table, bowed again, this time courteously, and followed the American.

Harry took the path towards Schloss Eltz, walking rapidly against the cool afternoon breeze. The artist kept at his side and, from time to time, made gay attempts to converse, by signs and the few English words that he knew. Austen responded by signs, far more clumsy than those of the German, but still intelligible. They passed the farm-house in the intervale and pushed on into the thick forest. The sunlight shone in their faces, flickering through the straight trunks of the beeches. Reaching a little hollow, Harry motioned to his companion to sit down. Seating himself opposite, he drew from his pocket a sheet of paper and tore it in two. With a bit of pencil he scrawled rudely, in school-boy fashion, the figures of two men, standing, and signified that the German was to copy the sketch. Wonderingly Krause did so, quickly but with marvellous skill. Under one of the figures of the copy Harry wrote the word "Krowser," under the other, "Austen." The artist nodded and awaited developments. The American took the sketch, and spent several minutes, his mouth working with the unusual effort, adding to the drawing. Returning it, there ap-

peared in the hand of each of the figures an object which, by an effort of imagination, was seen to be a pistol. Krause drew at the bottom of the paper two pistols, and looked inquiringly at Harry, who nodded, pointed in the direction of his heart, and held up ten and then two fingers. The artist understood now. Snatching the paper, he scratched out the pistols, and, with feverish haste, drew two swords. Austen, shaking his head, put his hands into his pocket, producing two tiny revolvers, mounted in silver and ivory. They were a wedding gift that Sophie had, in joke, brought with them. "To shoot exorbitant inn-keepers," she had laughingly said.

Krause jumped up, uttering a volley of German, and slapped Austen's face. Harry's blood boiled. He grappled with the artist—but, instantly remembering, released his hold, bowing apologetically. There stood the two men in the thick wood, facing one another like wild beasts, the last rays of the setting sun intensifying the angry flush of their faces. Krause pointed to the west and to the pistols, which had fallen on the ground. The American took them up, handed them both to the artist, impatiently pulling off his coat as the latter inspected them. They were very small, but exquisitely made. The glitter of their silver mountings gave them a wicked look. Bowing, the German selected one, handed the other to Austen, took off his coat and vest and again pointed to the western sky, where the sun had gone behind the hills.

There was a certain exhilaration to Harry in this strange scene. He had little familiarity with weapons, and the idea of death had scarcely entered his mind. He was still in the fever of rage caught by the sight of Sophie bending over the jewel-box, taking out the trinkets which had meant so much to both of them. He drew himself up, stepped backward till his shoulders touched those of Krause, and then both paced forward, counting in loud tones the number of their steps. At the simultaneous sound, "Six," "Sechs," they stopped, turned, and, scarcely pausing a second, fired.

Harry felt a sting in his shoulder. Instinctively put-

ting up his hand, he felt the warm blood trickling down his arm. Swaying a moment, he fell, swooning partly from the wound, partly from a sense of what this trickling stream might mean. In a few moments he recovered, to find Krause bending over him trying to bind up his shoulder in a handkerchief. His shirt was soaked in blood, but the gathering darkness made it difficult to guess the extent of the wound. From the freedom of the German's movements, it was plain that Austen's bullet had missed its mark. Harry felt glad of this, and then found himself wondering why he should feel glad to have failed in the thing he had planned to do. Only a few minutes before, it had seemed to him that nothing but the artist's death could wipe out that hateful picture of his kneeling wife and the devilish mocking of her peals of laughter. Now he took pleasure in watching the easy movements of the German as he bound the wound and brought water from a spring.

It was almost dark. Suddenly there came a sound of snapping twigs, as of some one breaking through the forest. Krause started, hesitated a moment, snatched up his coat and, running swiftly, started off toward the castle. Harry called him feebly, but he turned for a second only. Through the twilight, Austen saw him shake his fist. The rude bandage had stopped the flow of blood, but Harry felt very weak. Trying to rise, he sank back, fainting. He crawled on his sound side to the spring and slaked his burning thirst. The damp ground felt cool and grateful. He lay flat on his back trying to see a star to keep him company, and as he lay there, he began to think. Never before in his life had he done so much thinking. His first feeling was of triumph. He had committed suicide in a perfectly proper way and had vindicated his honor. But had he vindicated his honor? Had he not rather brought scandal upon his own and his wife's good name? After all, what did it amount to? Wasn't his death just what these two wished for. Wouldn't that cowardly devil of a German run back to Sophie, tell her the ghastly story and make her fly with him at once, before the murder should be discovered? Oh! impossible! She could

not be so wholly bad as that. She used to have a heart—years ago, was it, when they were engaged? Or was it only last week? Harry had thought so much, that it seemed ages since he came to Moselkern. He began now to look back over their happy life together and, as he recalled it, the tears rolled down his cheeks. He hadn't cried for years. Instinctively he looked around to see if he were observed, wiping his eyes with his blood-soaked sleeves. The smell of the blood was sickening. Ugh! "How long does it take to bleed to death?" he wondered. He grew colder and colder. This must be the death-chill. He tried to imagine the scene when Sophie should find him, stretched out there, dead and bloody. That would be a triumphant moment for him could he be there to see. Her horror, her remorse, would compensate him for all that he had suffered during the past days. Would she make, as she always did, a tableau, her pretty hair disheveled, her pretty eyes red with weeping, her white hands clasped in agony? He grew quite sentimental at the picture. Never before had he exerted his imagination, and the effort excited him agreeably. He enjoyed this vision for some time until it changed; the figure of woe stopped weeping, threw back its head and laughed, that devilish, mocking laugh that he hated. He tried to rise, to put his hand over that pretty mouth, but fell back, fainting.

When he came to himself, it was to find his head in Sophie's lap. She was bending over him, softly crying. He discovered, through the gloom, the figure of the old inn-keeper, to whom Sophie began to give orders, in German. The old fellow, bowing profusely, hovered around her in the aimless flutter of old age.

Austen tried to speak, but Sophie shook her head. "Hush," she said. "You mustn't speak, it will use up your strength," and she crooned sobbingly, as a mother does to a sick child. They remained thus for hours, it seemed. Once in a while she would start to ask a question, but, recollecting herself, would say "Hush!" and croon again. No sound broke the absolute stillness except the gurgling of the spring and an occasional sup-

pressed sob from Sophie. At last, lanterns, and, in their wake, huge white objects, formless and ghostly. They proved to be the old inn-keeper, the Englishman and the governess, each laden with a feather-bed, the German carrying coffee and bottles of his most famous wine, the vintage of '74.

It was a curious group. The Englishman, red and asthmatic with the exertion of his load; the governess excited to the pitch of delirium by this only adventure of her humdrum existence; the old German pouring out his precious wine, offering it and drinking it with unheard-of prodigality; in the midst the wounded man, half-buried in feather-beds, his head in his wife's lap; she, the sparkle, the gestures, the tableaux wholly forgotten, a very Niobe, "all tears."

"We have sent to Coblentz for a doctor," she whispered. "He will be here in the morning. Oh! Harry, my darling, don't die! don't die. It will kill me if you do. What happened? No, no, hush, don't speak," and she kissed his forehead softly, while the governess wept prodigiously and the Englishman cleared his throat with a noise that made Austen start.

Never did a night seem so long. The old inn-keeper built a fire of sticks, busying himself with replenishing it, bustlingly, a few twigs at a time. The Englishman paced back and forth, trying to keep warm, and the governess, sitting close beside Mrs. Austen, struggled to keep her eyes open that she might lose no detail of this romantic scene.

Dawn comes slowly in a beech forest. The birds had been singing for hours before the sunlight penetrated to this wooded hollow. It was six o'clock before the pathway was plain for any distance. Impatiently they watched this avenue. It seemed to them a very Jacob's ladder, and the Coblentz doctor an angel of mercy about to descend it. Harry had sunk into a light sleep, tossing restlessly on the hot feather-beds, straining to the utmost the physical endurance of his wife, who dared not move lest she should wake him. The horrid nightmare was dispelled by the final arrival of the surgeon. He was a young fellow, but deft and sympa-

thetic. He made a careful examination, washed and dressed the wound, adjusted a complicated bandage, and only when all these things had been done, looked toward Mrs. Austen. She had stood like a statue, her face tense, her muscles rigid, watching every movement of the physician. Only when he looked toward her did she utter a sound.

"Well?" The word came like the cry of an animal.

"Oh, nothing, Madame, but a flesh-wound. The ball has stayed not. He is soon well again," said the doctor.

Sophie broke down. She wept hysterically, the governess supporting her and crying in concert, while Harry watched his wife curiously, as though skeptical of her grief. When she had grown calmer, she resumed her old position, his head upon her knee. The men had gone to make a litter for the invalid.

"Were you murdered, my darling, darling boy?" she whispered, brokenly.

"No."

"Not—?" She could not utter the word "suicide." Besides, the governess sat close at her elbow. She looked angrily toward her. "Go away," she said.

The Englishwoman, used to this manner of address, meekly withdrew.

"I challenged Krause to a duel. He shot me and ran away. Haven't you seen him?" This magnificent sarcasm had been long in preparation.

"A duel? My God! What about?"

"About you, Mrs. Austen." Harry tried to preserve the proper iciness of tone, but he felt rather sheepish.

"About me? Oh! Harry, Harry, you were not such a——" she stopped.

"Yes, Mrs. Austen, I was such a fool, if that is your word, as to believe my own eyes." He had plunged in, and must keep on talking to preserve his courage in the face of those eyes of his wife's, looking full into his. "I am such a fool as to know love-talk when I hear it; I am fool enough to see love-letters when they are passed right before me; I am fool enough to know when I am caricatured, when I am ignored, when I am hoodwinked, when my pictures are thrown away and

the things I gave you are given to a dirty German. I am fool enough not to be fooled by——"

Sophie put her hand over his mouth. "But, Harry, how do you know these things?"

"Know? how do I know? Explain them if you can. Why did you make love to him in German when you know I can't understand it? Why did you whisper to him? Why did you hide things from me? Why did you take my pictures out of your jewel-box to throw them away or give them to him? Explain those things, if you can." Harry was quite exhausted by this unusual eloquence.

Sophie looked at him with an expression almost of pity. She sighed, perhaps a little complacently, and then: "Harry dear, if you don't understand German, how do you know I made love to him? Don't you know me well enough, don't you love me well enough, to know that I wouldn't?" She paused to see the effect of her words. Harry dropped his eyes and stirred uncomfortably. She went on:

"As to the whispering, the bits of paper, the photographs and the rest of the trumpery nonsense in your dear, old, stupid noddle, why, the fellow was making a water color of your dear old head. I wanted to surprise you, and I have the sketch, half-finished, in my trunk. Does that explain? Does that satisfy your mean suspicions?"

Austen made no reply.

"Harry," said his wife, "Harry?"

"Well."

"Kiss me, dear."

And the governess always dramatically announces in this point of her story:

"They wept copiously into one another's eyes."

A striking allegory is this strange tale by Alphonse Daudet. It has been turned into English for ROMANCE by Marion Martin.

THE MAN WITH A GOLDEN BRAIN.

THERE was once upon a time a man who had a brain of gold; yes, entirely of gold. When he came into the world, the physicians thought he would not live, his head was so heavy and his skull so large.

He lived nevertheless, and flourished like a beautiful olive-tree, only his head was too heavy for him, and it was pitiful to see him bump into the furniture when he walked.

He fell often. One day he tumbled from a high stoop and knocked his forehead against a marble step. The concussion produced a strangely metallic sound.

They thought he was dead, but on lifting him they found but a slight abrasion and two or three drops of gold clotted in his blond hair.

It was thus his parents learned that the child had a brain of gold.

It was kept a secret, the poor child suspecting nothing himself. From time to time he asked why he was not allowed to play in front of the house with the other boys of the street.

"Somebody would steal you, my beautiful treasure," responded his mother.

After this he became afraid of being stolen and played quietly alone, moving heavily from one room to another.

When he was eighteen years old, his parents told him of the monstrous gift he had received from Destiny, and asked him for the return of a little gold for having reared and nourished him.

The youth did not hesitate. That same hour—how, by what means, the legend does not say,—he tore from his skull a massive piece of gold the size of a nut, and flung it proudly into his mother's lap. Then, dazzled by the wealth he carried in his head, a fool in his

desires, he left the paternal roof and went out into the world to waste his treasure.

It seemed, from his royal manner of living and his scattering of uncounted gold, that his brain was inexhaustible. It was decreasing, nevertheless, and one could see that his eyes were growing dull, and his cheeks were becoming hollow.

One morning after a foolish debauch, as he sat surrounded by the débris of the festival and the fading lights, he was shocked at the inroads he had made on his ingots. It was time to stop!

From this time on, he led a new existence. The man with the golden brain went off by himself, and lived by the toil of his hands, suspicious and fearful as a miser, flying from temptations, and attempting to forget the fatal riches which he did not want to touch again.

Unfortunately a friend, who knew his secret, had followed him into his solitude.

One night the poor man woke suddenly with a pain in his head,—an intolerable pain. Raising himself quickly in bed, he saw, by a ray of moonlight, his friend in flight attempting to hide something under his mantle.

Again he had lost a little of his golden store.

Some time after this, the man with the golden brain fell in love, and then all was over with him. He loved with all his heart a little blonde woman who loved him also, but she loved still better top-knots, white feathers and tassels on her boots. In the hands of this pretty creature, half-bird, half-doll, the gold melted away. She was full of caprices and he did not know how to say no:—for fear of paining her, he hid the sad secret of his fortune.

"We are very rich, then?"—she said.

The poor man responded:

"Oh, yes—very rich."

And he smiled lovingly at the little blue-bird who was eating his brain so innocently. At times he would have fears and feel that he must be miserly, and then his little wife would come dancing up and say to him:

"My husband! you are so rich! buy me something very dear."

And he bought her something very dear.

Thus matters went on for two years, and then one morning the little wife died—as a bird dies—no one knew why.

The treasure was nearly gone, but with what remained the young widower gave his beloved dead a beautiful interment. There were chimes, coaches draped in black, horses with plumes, tears of silver on the black velvet draperies—nothing was too good. What was gold to him now? He gave it to the church, to the bearers, the women selling immortelles, to everybody without question, and when he came out of the cemetery, he had nothing left of his marvellous brain except a few scattered particles.

Presently he was seen in the streets staggering like a drunken man, feeling his way with his hands before him, his expression bewildered. That evening when the shops were lighted, he stopped before a large window in which was a confusion of stuffs brilliant under the flood of light.

He stood a long time looking at two blue satin boots bordered with swan's down. "I know some one to whom these boots would give great pleasure," said he to himself; and no longer remembering that his little wife was dead, he entered the shop to buy them.

From the back part of the store the proprietress heard a great cry. She ran forward, but recoiled in fear on seeing a man standing near the counter looking at her in stupid anguish. In one hand he held the blue boots with their fur border; in the other, covered with blood, he held out to her a few scrapings of gold.

This is the legend of the man with the golden brain, and despite its fantastic air, it is true from one end to the other.

There are poor people in the world who are condemned to live by their brain and to pay in fine gold—their sap and their substance—for the smallest things in life. Each day for them is sorrow, and when they are tired of suffering——